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ABSTRACT

A study examined the difficulties encountered by first-year, part-time Technical and Further Education (TAFE) students that cause them to consider withdrawing from, and in many cases, dropping out of their TAFE programs. Questionnaires were administered to 4,150 early withdrawers (persons who dropped out between January 1 and May 16, 1986), 2,940 later withdrawers (those who dropped out between May 17 and October 30, 1986), and 1,405 program persisters (persons still in the program as of October 31, 1986). Of those variables that affected 17 percent or more of the respondents, six could be classified as academic, four as environmental, one as a background variable, and one as a defining variable. The variables that were most likely to result in a decision to drop out were as follows: inability to resolve the pressures from mixing the demands of home, work, and study; difficulties in establishing a study routine; difficulties in organizing study time; teaching methods that did not stimulate interest; too much difficulty in meeting family commitments; an expansion of career options by virtue of only taking part of a course (thus obviating the need to complete a course); impossibility of home study because of home jobs; inadequate study skills; inability to cope with both work and study; failure to find a course interesting; and excessive demands imposed by after-work travel to college. (Appendixes include the questionnaires for early and later withdrawers and for program completers, a list of the liaison researchers who participated in the study, and the original and followup letters that were sent to early withdrawers.) (MN)

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TAFE NATIONAL CENTRE FOR
RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

ATTRITION OF PART-TIME TAFE CERTIFICATE STUDENTS

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FOREWORD

In 1984 the TAFE National Centre for Research and Development published a study of the reasons why TAFE students failed to complete courses. This study drew upon American college-based research and TAFE studies until that time. Author Christine McDonald had noted the gradual change in the emphasis in attrition research from a student-oriented approach to one which examined the interaction between institutional and student variables.

The current study of part-time students who were first year withdrawers from TAFE certificate courses in 1986 was commissioned by the Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission. While accepting that student variables in themselves are important it has been based primarily on the assumption that it is the interaction of these student variables with the academic, environmental and psychological variables impacting on the student which really gives the clue as to why students withdraw.

The study has paralleled closely a similar study of attrition in higher education institutions undertaken at Monash University by Dr. Leo West and a number of associates. The authors are grateful to Dr West for his willingness to allow them to use his questionnaires in developing our own instruments.

This report is the result of the work of a number of people besides the authors. Mr Max Smith, former Director of Planning and Resources in the South Australian Department of TAFE, was responsible for the preparation and the initial administration of the questionnaires. The data analyses was carried out by Mr Ken Goody of Information Consultancy and Processing in Canberra.

In addition, the Centre has worked closely with liaison officers in each state and territory. These liaison officers have been responsible for the administration of the questionnaires in their own systems.

Besides acknowledging and expressing their grateful thanks to the above for their invaluable contributions to this report, the authors also extend their grateful thanks to:

the members of the advisory committee
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DEFINITIONS AND ABBREVIATIONS

3300 Trade Technician/Trade Supervisors

Courses in this stream provide skills at a level beyond trade or trade-equivalent skills and may include skills needed for supervision, but do not provide the level and breadth of specialisation required by the para-professional.

3400 Para-professional/Technician

These courses usually cover a breadth of specialised skills leading to employment in para-professional vocations. The work of graduates of these courses requires the exercise of judgment and may involve specialist functions. This work is carried out primarily in support of professionals.

3500 Para-professional/Higher Technician

These courses provide for specialisation of skills beyond that typical of stream 3400 in terms of depth and/or scope. They prepare students for employment in para-professional vocations which may require a variety of specialist functions and require the exercise of judgment. Graduates of these courses usually are employed at higher occupational levels than those of stream 3400 courses and work in support of professionals or may, in some situations, work independently.

Part-time student

The Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission does not separate a part-time student specifically from a full-time student, but by implication suggests that a part-time student attends less than 540 contact hours in any one academic year. Those part-time students who were first year withdrawers from TAFE certificate courses in 1986 constituted the target group of this study.

Early withdrawer

The respondent must have withdrawn from all subjects being taken as a part-time student in the period January 1 to May 16, 1986.

(The respondent must have enrolled in and attended one class in the course, or, if an external student, submitted one assignment of work in the period. In neither case was a class or assignment of an orientation kind accepted.)

Late withdrawer

The respondent must have attended during the period January 1 to May 16, 1986 and have continued in the same course in the second half year before withdrawing before October 30, 1986. A change in subjects is not relevant.

Persister

The respondent must have still been in the course on October 30, 1986.

CES Commonwealth Employment Service

CTEC Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission

ESSC Evaluative Studies Steering Committee of the CTEC

TEC Tertiary Education Commission

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SUMMARY

The purpose of the current project has been to identify the difficulties (variables) encountered by first-year part-time TAFE certificate students which cause them to consider withdrawing and, in many cases, to drop out.

These variables have been classified into factors based on a model developed by Bean and Metzner (1985). Besides what are called background and defining variables, for example the age and sex of the student, there are academic, environmental and psychological factors. It was found that, of the variables which affected 17% or more of the respondents, there were six academic factors, four environmental and one background and defining variable. Further, by using cluster analyses, it was found that withdrawers could be divided into 15 groups.

The purpose of the current project was achieved with the identification of the difficulties, but it was also possible to make some very general recommendations. They are:

- . counsellors, when interviewing students, should establish the work and home demands on them and advise them to tailor their programs to suit (p.143);
- . special steps should be taken to identify people who enter TAFE courses with difficulties in studying effectively and to provide them with special programs to cope with their problems (p.144);
- . students who indicate an intention to withdraw should be counselled immediately such indication is known (p.145);
- . the training of TAFE lecturers and curriculum developers should reflect the challenge of the need to use methods which stimulate interest and to develop interesting course materials (p.145).
- . college and course administrators should monitor reasons for withdrawal through exit interviews or questionnaires. The 15 groups of withdrawers identified in this study should be used as a basis for such interviews and questionnaires (p.147).

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Development of proposal

In April 1985, the TAFE National Centre for Research and Development was commissioned by the Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission (CTEC) under its Evaluation and Investigations Program to undertake a project to examine the attrition of part-time (both internal and external) students in TAFE stream 3300, 3400 and 3500 courses. These courses are generally of the order of three to four years part-time.

Increasingly, attrition is used as a measure of tertiary course effectiveness, or student quality, or both. If rates of attrition are high, it is common to hear the criticism that the course must have failed or that the students are of poor quality and that 'standards' must have fallen. Whatever the reason, it is claimed that money must have been wasted.

Many TAFE courses have extremely high attrition rates and this applies particularly to those courses enrolling part-time students. One of the reasons given by TAFE Authorities for high attrition rates is that students leave (as distinct from dropping out or failing) courses because they have achieved their own personal objectives for that course. This hypothesis should be tested because, if it is valid, it poses important implications for the design, structure, modes of delivery and funding of TAFE courses.

The results of this study may be used to form an understanding of the nature of the processes which lead to withdrawal and to provide information for developing policies directed at minimising undesirable withdrawal.

1.2 The purposes of the project

The purposes of the project are to:

- (a) find out why first-year students discontinue their studies in selected stream 3300, 3400 and 3500 part-time TAFE courses in the fields of science/technology (specifically applied to applied science and engineering), horticulture (including rural studies, parks and gardens and similar), fashion (excluding hairdressing) and business (including secretarial). It was not intended that the study should collect precise statistical information about withdrawal, but should provide information to help in policy formulation. The choice of courses was such as to allow sufficient generalisation to meet this purpose.

(b) determine the influence of the following factors on the decision to discontinue -

- i) achievement of study objectives;
- ii) course (general and teaching/learning);
- iii) college/colleges;
- iv) distance/remoteness (isolation)/travel;
- v) human relationships;
- vi) practical matters;
- vii) personal matters;
- viii) academic preparedness;
- ix) health;
- x) work related decisions;
- xi) finance;
- xii) unexpected events.

(c) find out the problems faced and overcome by students who persist in the part-time TAFE courses as listed in (a).

(d) determine the influence on persisters of the same factors as in (b).

(e) compare and contrast the relative effects of identified problems on withdrawers and persisters and to relate both to the specified factors.

A similar project has been conducted into the reasons why full-time students have withdrawn from higher education (West et al, 1986). A further purpose of this current project is to relate its findings to those of West et al.

Their study was aimed at estimating

(a) the extent of withdrawal from full-time studies in the university and advanced education sectors, and

(b) the numbers of students who withdraw for certain broad groups of reasons.

It was aimed also at investigating the discriminating characteristics of the withdrawers in these broad groups.

West et al surveyed four groups of withdrawers at various stages of withdrawal and a group of persisters. The current study surveys two groups of withdrawers (called early and later withdrawers) and a group of persisters. The reasons for withdrawal and the discriminating characteristics of the withdrawers determined in each study will be compared.

2. THE IMPORTANCE OF STUDENT ATTRITION AS AN ISSUE IN TAFE - A REVIEW OF THE CURRENT LITERATURE

The TAFE Council of the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC, 1978) noted that enrolments and teaching efforts are the major inputs into an education system. Equally important is the output of the system as evidenced by the number of students who have obtained from the courses the results desired. It is always difficult to measure results of this kind, particularly in TAFE, where a fairly high proportion of students fail to complete their courses. Many analysts have regarded this as an inevitable result of studying part-time, usually in evening classes in conjunction with day-time work and, if TAFE continues to meet the expectations of the community by providing for these large numbers of part-time students, high withdrawal rates will continue.

However, rather than accept high withdrawal rates in TAFE as inevitable, a detailed analysis of the reasons for student withdrawal is needed so that remedial action might be taken if that is necessary. The TAFE Council (TEC, 1978) suggested that the reasons included the following and that more information on them was needed:

- . a tendency for some students to enrol in courses on a 'try it and see' basis,
- . the close nexus between TAFE courses and employment; a change of employment can lead to withdrawal from a course,
- . the pressures of part-time study on people with other commitments,
- . the fact that many students obtain what they need for vocational purposes before completion of a full course.

The Evaluative Studies Steering Committee (ESSC) of the CTEC has had an interest in the reasons for discontinuation of students in para-professional courses. There is an hypothesis that most students leave (as distinct from drop out of) courses because they have achieved their own personal objectives. It considered that such an hypothesis needs to be tested because, if withdrawal for this reason were high, more specific courses should be structured to meet student needs (Gallagher, 1985).

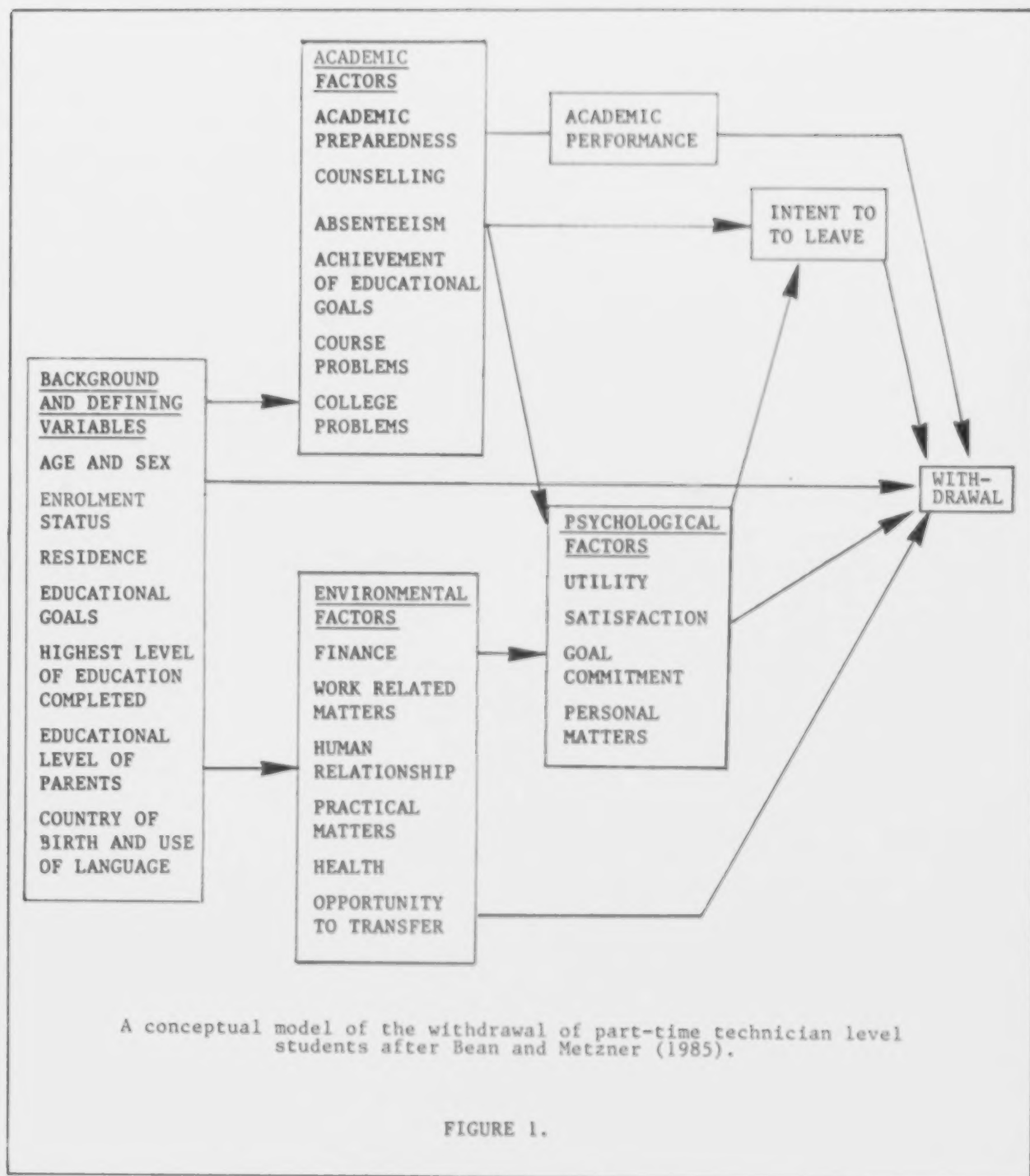


FIGURE 1.

The TAFE Council considered that every endeavour had to be made to reduce unnecessary attrition and that the first step was to find more information on the factors listed above, particularly the last. This study aims, inter alia, to do just that.

2.1 Retention strategies

MacDonald (1984) reported that studies of withdrawal rates in TAFE technician courses in Australia showed that TAFE fares badly when it comes to the completion rates of part-time students. She reported the results of Gilbert (1973), Mitchell (1974), Brougham (1978), Jacobs (1981) and Naylor and Naylor (1982). Attrition rates were reported to range from a low of 32% to a high of 87%. Naylor and Naylor found that, generally, total attrition across all states in the technician courses which they studied in 1976 and 1977 was in the 33%-43% range, with Western Australia at 22% being the only exception.

MacDonald concluded that, while attrition rates may vary dramatically in TAFE courses, they often appear to be extremely high. She expressed the view also that such high attrition rates might be interpreted as evidence that the development of retention strategies should be a priority for TAFE certificate courses.

2.2 A conceptual model of the withdrawal of part-time technician level students

A conceptual model of the withdrawal of part-time technician level students has been developed based on that of Bean and Metzner (1985) for non-traditional (that is older, part-time and commuting) student attrition in the United States.

The model (Fig. 1) is based on the assumption that decisions to withdraw are based primarily on four sets of variables:

- . background and defining variables such as age, residence, highest level of education completed;
- . environmental variables such as finance, work-related matters, human relationships and opportunity for transfer. In the model it is suggested that this factor is directly affected by the background and defining variables;
- . academic variables such as study habits, counselling, absenteeism and course availability. This set of variables is affected also by the background and defining variables;

- . psychological variables such as the perceived utility of the course, satisfaction with it, goal commitment and the stress caused by study. These variables are seen as being affected either directly or indirectly by those in the other three groups.

(The latter three sets of variables arise from the context within which a student studies and in this study are called factors).

The effects of these variables on students lead to the conscious intent to leave and then to withdrawal.

2.2.1 Background and defining variables

The original research into attrition in education was weighted heavily to the idea that the reason lay in some quality or combination of qualities in the student. Consequently, research studies were directed towards family background, religious preferences, social behaviour, academic background, personality variables, marital status and so on.

Such information is important and indeed some of it has been sought in the current study. The difficulty lay in that earlier studies considered students in isolation from the context within which they studied and led to possible absurd interpretations. One such which the author did not intend to be taken literally is quoted by Astin (1977).

...Dropping out is also associated with being older than most freshmen, having Protestant parents, having no religious preference, and being a cigarette smoker...
(p.45)

Even so, some of the research into the inter-relation between background and defining variables and attrition bears reporting:

(a) Age and sex

Australian TAFE studies have failed to find any significant connections between age or sex and the tendency to withdraw. Bean and Metzner (1985) reported that research in the United States had shown that age was not a major factor in the attrition of non-traditional students (although there was some correlation with family responsibilities, remoteness and hours of employment).

TABLE 1
REASONS GIVEN FOR DROPPING OUT BY SEX:
THREE NATIONAL STUDIES IN THE UNITED STATES

	MEN			WOMEN		
Rank of order Mention	Iffert (1957)	Panos-Astin (1967)	Astin (1977)	Iffert (1957)	Panos-Astin (1967)	Astin (1977)
1	lack of interest in studies	dissatisfied with college environment	boredom with courses	marriage	marriage	marriage, pregnancy, or other responsibilities
2	military enlistment	need time to reconsider goals, interest	some other reason	took full-time job	dissatisfied with college environment	financial difficulties
3	financial (self)	financial	financial difficulties	financial (self)	changed career plans	boredom with courses
4	low grades	changed career plans	poor grades	lack of interest in	financial studies	some other reason
5	financial (family)	low grades	dissatisfaction with require- ments or regulations	financial (family)	need time to reconsider goals, interests	dissatisfaction with require- ments or regulations
6	studies too difficult	marriage	change in career goals	low grades	pregnancy	change in career goals
7	military (drafted)	scholarship terminated	marriage, pregnancy, or other family responsibilities	studies too difficult	tired of being a student	poor grades

By contrast, Tinto (1975) and Greer (1980) reported that older students are more likely to drop out than younger students even when they have earned equivalent or better grades.

Also in the United States, Cope and Hannah (1975) have noted that the reasons given for withdrawal are sex related. They cited three national studies published in 1957 (Iffert), 1967 (Panos and Astin) and 1977 (Astin). The results of these studies indicated the major reason given by women for dropping out was marriage and by men lack of motivation or interest. The findings of these three studies are shown in Table 1. In the view of Cope and Hannah, these studies illustrated that men and women consistently give different reasons for withdrawal; men tended to cite internal and academic reasons, women external and non-academic ones.

(b) Enrolment status

This investigation is concerned with part-time students only. Lenning et al (1980) reported that in the United States these students had a greater attrition rate than full-time students.

(c) Residence

In one sense this is irrelevant to part-time students at TAFE colleges in Australia, because they spend little time on campus outside of class. This compares starkly with the necessary involvement of those full-time students who live in college residence.

But there is another aspect of residence which is very pertinent to the study conditions of TAFE part-time technician-level students. Many have to travel long distances (often by public transport). There has been no research reported on how these difficulties might affect attrition in part-time TAFE courses. This study takes up that question.

Another aspect of this problem of isolation which is addressed in this study is that of the difficulties faced by external students. Mellors (1983) quoted a Western Australian report by Collins and Kennedy thus:

...Withdrawal from subjects is a significant problem among external students although it is much less so with those over 23 years. In view of

the evidence that mature age students can perform very well in this mode of study, it would be pertinent to concentrate efforts particularly to reduce attrition in this mature age group. Study survival kits, bridging units and counselling services designed specifically for adults returning to study after a break of some years warrant further attention. But these remedial strategies are somewhat instrumental in their approach and what may be more appropriate is an examination of the content and design of external courses to ensure that they are more sensitively tuned to the circumstances of the adult learner... (p. 24).

Mellors (1983) conducted a case study of the withdrawal of off-campus (external) students at Footscray College of TAFE in Victoria. Although the enrolment statistics suggested that the off-campus mode was meeting demands for access and recurrent education, he said that the statistics were marred by those on attrition rates. Over half of the students surveyed had completed a quarter or less of their assignments.

In seeking reasons for this Mellors found that a number of things had led to the decision to withdraw:

- . lack of necessary text books
- . failure to receive material
- . late return of marked assignments
- . no clear direction on whom to contact if a problem occurred.

Mellors noted also that the main drop-out occurred before the first assignment. He suggested that the first few assignments in any external courses should be designed to ensure success.

(d) Educational goals

Bean and Metzner (1985) commented that the initial educational goals of a student may contain motivational influences which affect persistence. They identified the following goals which may be important:

- . the gaining of an education;
- . the highest level of education sought;

Bachmann and Naylor (1982) in a survey of all students in New South Wales who had withdrawn from commerce and accounting certificate courses during 1980 found that, of those who abandoned their courses, 39.1% claimed that the course was different from their expectations. The authors concluded that there appeared to be a considerable level of false expectation among students beginning courses. Yet very few discussed their intention to withdraw with their lecturers or counsellors.

Greer (1980) reported that older students were more certain of their goals than traditional-age students.

(e) Highest level of education completed

Lenning et al (1980) have suggested that, in American higher education, academic factors represent the strongest predictions of retention. They said that most studies show a significant, positive relationship between persistence and entrance-examination scores.

Any similar relationship in TAFE in Australia is an open question for, as MacDonald (1984) commented, there are relatively few studies in TAFE which correlate academic factors with student withdrawal.

Brougham (1974) reported that those with less than ten years of formal schooling said that they found difficulty in organising their study programs. But this was only one side of the story. Those who had matriculation or university qualifications tended to express a lack of interest in the content of TAFE courses.

(f) Educational level of parents

Bean and Metzner (1985) reported that some researchers had claimed that there was a positive relationship between the educational level of parents and student persistence. Other researchers had been equivocal.

(g) Country of birth and use of language

West et al (1986) found that persisters were more likely to be born in a country other than Australia and were less likely to speak English at home.

2.2.2 Variables arising from the context within which a student studies

The limitations of the earlier research have led to a gradual change in emphasis in attrition research from a student-oriented approach to one which concentrates on the interaction of a variety of variables other than those directly reflecting an aspect of the student. These variables may be gathered into groups, which in this study are called factors. A factor is a group of like variables, the interaction of students with which is an essential part of this study.

Nevertheless MacDonald (1984) reported that very few American studies have been based on such an approach. This has been because attempts to do so have been challenged by their failure to identify the most important variables. Much recent work in Australia has been directed at these challenges.

Boesen (1976) observed that a few studies existed in which variables potentially related to attrition had been investigated. He argued that these studies failed to give an adequate justification for selection of the particular variables examined and for the exclusion of other variables. That is, the selection of variables is a matter of judgement. Once the variables are selected, they may be grouped into 'factors' which, if the variables selected are correct, will be central to the decision of a student to persist or withdraw. MacDonald summarised these factors as:

- . student expectation
- . student commitment
- . time allocation
- . outcomes
- . satisfactions.

All that can be done at present is to select the variables which seem most relevant, group them according to similarity and investigate their interaction with respondent students.

The actual factors used in this study are set out in Section 1.2 (b) which together with the constituent variables are modifications of those used in the higher education study of West et al (1986). The factors and variables chosen by West et al, although arbitrary, were based soundly on the literature and are within the conceptual model which has been developed for this study on the basis of that of Bean and Metzner (1985).

Although all factors were considered to have influenced withdrawal, not all were necessarily to be regarded as adverse because withdrawal may have been in the best interest of the student.

In the model the factors which are themselves collections of like variables are grouped as shown in Figure 1.

(a) Academic factors

(i) Academic Preparedness

This is not the same as level of previous education because the latter may be no preparation at all for a TAFE technician-level course. Although Lenning et al (1980) found that students who withdrew described their study skills and habits as poor more often than did persisters, little work has been done on lack of background knowledge and skills and of command of English.

Bean and Metzner (1985) found that persisters spent more time studying than did drop-outs. They found also that many older students who entered college after a lengthy absence from the formal learning situation lacked confidence in their abilities to succeed, rated their study skills as deficient and spent more hours of study outside of class than younger students.

(ii) Counselling

Bean and Metzner (1985) reported that the findings of the effects of counselling in attrition had been inconsistent but that perhaps, in the long run, counselling made very little difference. For example Staman (1980) found that for commuters and older students the amount of time they spent with an academic adviser was not significantly related to persistence while Baumgart and Johnstone (1977) found that for part-time male students there was no difference in satisfaction between persisters and drop-outs with advisory services.

Bachmann and Naylor (1982) have found that very few people discussed their intention to withdraw with their lecturers or with counsellors.

MacDonald (1984) commented that, once students have enrolled, personal contact between counselling staff and students virtually ceases. The current high drop-out rates show that it is imperative to counsel student effectively at enrolment and to introduce measures which will promote student retention. Retention counselling needs to be proactive by taking action before the problem starts, e.g. group meetings, development of bridging courses.

(iii) Absenteeism

Bean and Metzner (1985) reported that the connection between absenteeism and attrition has rarely been investigated. Most people would guess that staying away from classes is a preliminary to drop out while Greer (1980) expected that older students would tend to miss classes because of job or family responsibilities and could be forced to drop out.

(iv) Achievement of educational goals

Alfred (1973) commented that many students at community colleges in the United States do not seek qualifications but do courses for job enhancement or personal enrichment. These students showed inordinate rates of attrition but should not be compared with students who discontinue prematurely in a course leading to a qualification. Walleri (1981) considered that such students who had short-term educational goals should be studied as a separate sub-group in attrition research. Bean and Metzner (1985) found no such research.

Withdrawal from courses because educational goals have been achieved may well be considered attrition in the best interests of the student and, although these students are not considered separately in this project, the methodology is defined to identify the importance of the achievement of educational goals as a reason for TAFE part-time technician students withdrawing.

This understanding that educational goals do not necessarily include gaining a qualification has led to the growing tendency to see attrition in a more positive light than it has been in the past. It is possible, for example, for students to attain a personal goal without feeling the need to graduate.

Naylor and Naylor (1982) maintained that attrition rates may be misleading. Students may fail to complete a TAFE course because they have attained a level of proficiency sufficient to gain employment. If a specific aim of a course is to help students become employable, then the fact that the student withdraws from the course upon finding employment cannot be viewed as a negative educational outcome. Nor can the student be viewed as an incomplete product of the institution offering the course. This was well illustrated by Curtis (1984) who found that 67% of respondents who withdrew from a secretarial studies course withdrew because they had obtained employment.

But such a view has its dangers. As Byrne et al (1984) pointed out, this line of reasoning can lead to the claim that the least successful students in some TAFE courses are those who graduate.

Put simply, it is inappropriate to compare the effectiveness of courses simply in terms of raw attrition rates. The objectives of a particular course need to be known. Nevertheless, whatever judgements are made about attrition rates in particular courses, in general most people would agree that current attrition rates in TAFE are unacceptably high.

(v) Course problems

MacDonald (1984) suggested that the teacher plays an important role in the decision of many students to withdraw. If the teaching is stimulating, relevant and involving, it is likely to promote persistence. If it is dull, irrelevant and alienating, it is likely to have the opposite effect. However, most research so far has paid scant attention to this relationship but, as has been pointed out in section 2.2.2., has been rather more concerned with finding out what is wrong with the student. This is rather like a storekeeper who, losing his custom, wonders what is wrong with his customers rather than with his products and service.

MacDonald reported that a number of studies have shown that frequency of, and satisfaction with, student/staff relationships was a contributing factor

to retention. In TAFE technician part-time programs there is little time for student/staff involvement outside the classroom, which is therefore the key arena where the teacher has the challenge of creating a sense of involvement.

One irony is reported by Mellors (1983). The very factors making for motivation towards course completion for some students viz self-pacing and feeling more comfortable may be the downfall of others. Self-pacing puts great responsibility on individual students to organise themselves and many do not have the skills to do this unaided. Similarly, some students (particularly those off-campus) may be too complacent and may need deadlines to keep them moving.

Bean and Metzner (1985) raised a course organisational question which may have a very strong effect on persistence. They noted that, if the courses are not scheduled at times to suit the student, attrition rates will climb.

Walleri (1981) combined the positive aspects of the two issues immediately above. He said that flexible scheduling and the development of alternative modes of delivery are likely to be effective in promoting persistence among part-time students.

(vi) College problems

Noel (1978) argued as follows:

...First, a genuine concern about student retention and commitment to develop and implement retention strategies must be visible at all levels of the institution..... The second essential condition is equally comprehensive; to be effective, a retention strategy must affect all points where students interact with the institution...(p. 87-88).

Pantages and Creedon (1978) noted that only in the last 15 years has research focused on the college environment and its influence on retention and attrition.

Student services

The importance of counselling is commented upon in Section 2.2.2 (a) (ii) above. Other student services which studies indicate improve persistence are academic advising, orientation programs and learning-assistance centres.

Mission and role of the college

Lenning et al (1980) reported that institutions with a clearly defined mission have higher retention rates. These institutions are best able to attract students who will fit in because they know what to expect.

Extra-curricular activities

Pantages and Creedon (1978) reported that a number of studies supported the proposition that there was a positive relationship between involvement in campus activities and student retention. Macdonald (1984) commented that the very high incidence of withdrawal among part-time students may reflect the relative lack of opportunity for students to gain a sense of involvement. This comment applies particularly to TAFE students.

Administrative policies and procedures

* Macdonald (1984) commented that there appeared to have been little research into the influence of administrative policies and procedures on student persistence.

Concern for student progress

There should be focus on the extent to which an institution identifies the prior knowledge and skills required for any given subject and the extent to which it provides for those students who are accepted without all those which are identified. There should also be attempts to identify the extent to which students are satisfied with their ability to learn or to organise a study program.

(b) Environmental factors

Bean and Metzner (1985) have defined these as factors over which the institution has very little control.

(i) Finance

Macdonald (1984) noted that in American studies lack of finance was often reported as a major reason for student drop-out. The variables considered have included:

- . student concern about finances
- . financial aid
- . employment (i.e. part-time employment in relation to full-time study).

Macdonald did not consider this factor to be relevant to a study of attrition such as this. She reflected the views of a number of researchers who have questioned the validity of many responses which gave inadequate finance as a reason for drop-out. For example Cope and Hannah (1975) reported that family income was not highly correlated with the listing of inadequate finance as a reason for withdrawing and suggested that such answers may be a reflection of the needs of students to express drop-out in more socially acceptable terms than lack of commitment to education or to unsuitable personal traits.

The advice of Macdonald has not been followed in this study. Rather it is seen as a question to be resolved.

In their investigation, West et al (1986) reported that the drop-outs for financial reasons were the consequence of insufficient funds to cope with regular living expenses and the inability to do anything about it while continuing as a full-time student. Withdrawers for this reason tended to come from low socio-economic levels. West et al commented that this must lead to a diluting of any gains through access and equity and PEP programs. Policies targeted at this group of withdrawers would be worth considering.

West et al found also that students who were financed by their parents tended to drop out for course, institution, isolation, distance or family reasons while those who had to finance themselves dropped out for family, finance, job or health reasons. This is predictable to the extent that people who finance themselves are more easily affected by circumstances which change their financial situations. West et al

also found that those who financed themselves generally tended to persist better than those who were financed by their parents.

An extension of the financial question is raised by Tinto (1975). He said that withdrawal implies a decision on the part of the student that the benefits of the course and of persistence do not outweigh the costs (both financial and effort) of attendance. It can be argued that perceived benefits increase with increasing nearness to completion. As a result, the perceived ratio of benefits to costs, other things being equal, would tend to increase as the course continues and withdrawals lessen.

(ii) Work-related matters

Naylor and Naylor (1982) in the only national study of attrition in TAFE identified work-related problems as the most common reason for withdrawal. Conflict with the demands of the work was reported by Macdonald (1984) as being most consistently the major reason. Mitchell (1974) reported that withdrawers from a Building Technicians Certificate course at Marleston College of TAFE in South Australia tended to have greater difficulty with work-related problems than persisters.

Astin (1977) noted that the number of hours per week for which a person was employed was related to persistence. He noted that students employed for fewer than 20 hours per week were more likely to persist than those unemployed or those employed for more than 20 hours. TAFE part-time students are likely to be employed and to work for more than 25 hours per week and so are less likely to persist than full-time students.

(iii) Human relationship matters

Lenning et al (1980) found that the influence of the peer group is related positively to persistence. The quality of the relationship and the educational values endorsed by the peer group are most important. There are two aspects of this which might be considered:

- . The peer group includes the spouse or flat-mate of the student.

- . Many studies support the premise that students who establish close relationships with other persons show greater persistence.

Bean and Metzner (1985) noted that association with peers who are not students has a very important effect on attrition. Peer discouragement of options such as gaining employment had positive effects on persistence.

The extent to which employers are supportive of college attendance not only may provide students with psychological reinforcement for continuing college study but also may affect student persistence by more pragmatic means such as adjusting work hours to meet academic schedules, providing fee remissions and promotion opportunities.

Bean and Metzner saw external encouragement as being more important for part-time students because their reference group of peers, friends, families and employers are external to the institution.

For many part-time students the most important of these groups is the family. In fact Carter (1982) reported that family reasons were among the five most common of 60 reasons for withdrawing given by older, part-time students at exit interviews at an American University. Further Berkove (1976) reported that dropouts for older married female students who had at least one child at home were higher than for the student body in general. On the other hand West et al (1986) reported that many persisters who had considered withdrawing commented that the most positive support had come from the immediate family.

(iv) Practical matters

Researchers have tended not to consider the impact of such things as missing sports training too often, having a baby or finding the tasks at home impossible.

(v) Health

No work has been reported on the effect of ill-health (physical and mental) on withdrawal although Bean and Metzner (1985) noted that poor health could lead to withdrawal from college.

(c) Psychological factors

There are a number of variables concerned with the opinions and feelings of students themselves.

(i) Utility

Lenning et al (1980) found that, if students perceived their college courses as useful for employment purposes and personal development, they were more likely to persist. The perceived value of an education for future employment was an important factor.

(ii) Satisfaction

Bean and Metzner (1985) reported that the more students enjoy the role of being students the less likely they are to drop out.

The findings of American research reported by Bean and Metzner suggest that satisfaction with the role of a student might be a particularly important variable for TAFE students given the likelihood of:

- . a preference for practical rather than theoretical knowledge among a number of students;
- . the prevalence of outside commitments which might render academic activities a burden;
- . in many cases, inferior academic preparation made course work, initially at least, more difficult;
- . often a prolonged program of part-time study leads to student 'burn-out'.

(iii) Goal commitment

The more importance that students ascribe to obtaining an education, the more likely they are to persist. Bean and Metzner (1985) noted that this element has rarely been included as a variable in attrition research, but that where vocational and occupational goals of students are specific, there is a tendency for them to persist.

(iv) Personal matters

These tend not to have been researched. Questions such as the effect of loneliness or a change of lifestyle on withdrawal or persistence have not been canvassed.

In the Bean and Metzner (1985) conceptual model many of the personal matters are seen as stress factors. They listed:

- . conflicts in the home between students, children and parents about autonomy and value;
- . marital discord;
- . trouble with the children;
- . personal and family debt.

Metzner (1984) found that personal matters rated seventh in fourteen factors which may be used in predicting intent to leave.

- (v) Opportunity to transfer
- Parkinson et al (1986) have assumed that if the admission and status (i.e. advanced standing or exemption) policies of universities and colleges of advanced education (i.e. institutions of higher education) recognised formally the full achievement of students who had TAFE qualifications, these institutions would have access to a pool of students who, if admitted or granted status, would have a more than reasonable chance of success.

Bean (1982) noted that, if students perceived difficulties in transfer to another institution, they were more likely to stay in the original institution. If TAFE students found transfer to higher education easier than it is at present, then many students might leave a course at the appropriate time. Like the achievement of educational goals, this may be seen as a positive outcome of attrition.

2.2.3 Academic performance

Traditional wisdom would suggest that the better the academic performance of students at college, the more likely they are to persist. Bean and Metzner (1985) reported that this was not universally true. In fact they noted that Staman (1980) had discovered that academic performance showed no significant relationship to the persistence of older students who commuted to college. Virtually all part-time TAFE certificate students commute and therefore it is likely that there may be no relationship between their academic performance and persistence.

2.3 Problems faced by both withdrawers and persisters

MacDonald (1984) suggested that, although it may be possible to correlate, for example, background and defining variables with a propensity to withdraw, it is likely to be less costly and more effective to identify the factors which encourage students to persist.

This approach has not been taken in the current study. Rather the emphasis is on withdrawal which the literature suggests results from a combination of factors rather than a single isolated factor. Further it is suggested that it may be possible to identify some key institutional variables which have a disproportionate effect on the tendency to withdraw. From this identification strategies for action can be determined. As no single factor is paramount, no single strategy is likely to be effective on its own.

However, whether students withdraw or persist they still face similar problems. Boshier (1973) developed what he called the congruence model on educational participation and drop-out. He maintained that the interaction between the participant and his educational environment (which would be the same for both withdrawers and persisters) determined whether a student withdrew or persisted

He divided adult students into either growth - or deficiency-motivated in at least one aspect of behaviour. Growth-motivated people are inner-directed, autonomous, open to new experiences, willing to be spontaneous, and creative. They are relatively independent from their environment and so are not affected by adverse circumstances such as poor teaching. On the other hand deficiency-motivated people are afraid of the environment. Mellors (1983) in his interpretation of Boshier's work infers that growth-motivated is synonymous with being in a high socio-economic group and deficiency motivated a low socio-economic group.

Boshier maintained that a growth-motivated person (by inference from a high socio-economic group) is more likely to find his needs and the arrangements of an adult education institution as congruent (Spady, 1971; and Tinto, 1975, adopted the term 'fit' to describe this congruent interaction).

By contrast, a deficiency-motivated person (by inference from a low socio-economic group) is likely to be dissatisfied with his educational environment and to drop out. In Boshier's terms the

needs of the student and the arrangements of the adult education institution are not congruent and in the terms of Spady and Tinto there is a 'lack of fit'.

That is, persistence can be increased if the environment can be modified to assist potential drop-outs to overcome the problems of 'lack of fit'. Mellors maintained that the responsibility of this rests with the administrators organising the educational experiences for adults.

MacDonald (1984) suggested two strategies for this: the development of appropriate publicity so that potential students are well-informed about colleges and course offerings; enrolment interviews with appropriate counselling to inform students of what is expected of them and to ascertain whether they are sufficiently prepared.

This is consistent with the view of Lenning et al (1980) who reported that 'the best fit' between students and institutions is in those institutions which have a clearly defined mission. In fact Boesen (1976) recommended that student/institution fit should be measured in all future studies of TAFE student withdrawals.

Mitchell (1974) suggested that the persisters were more able to identify their problems and to separate them from their other worries, while withdrawers have a more confused appreciation of their problems (i.e. persisters find it easier to develop a fit than withdrawers). He also was able to show that, as a generalisation, withdrawers tended to concentrate on factors related to employment while persisters tended to concentrate on factors related to the course and the college. This could suggest that the persisters continue their studies because they are able to identify and to overcome the dissatisfactions they might have with the college program. In fact Lenning et al (1980) suggested that persistence may be related more to willingness or ability to endure dissatisfaction than dissatisfaction itself.

A similar study by Brougham (1978) had findings consistent with those of Mitchell in that he found that the effects of occupation were cited most frequently as explanations for student withdrawal. However Brougham identified other reasons such as personal factors (e.g. accident, illness, pregnancy, holidays) and course-related factors. Brougham did not attempt to look at the problems faced by persisters.

2.4 Time of withdrawing

Fundamental to the methodology of West et al (1986) was the investigation of reasons for withdrawal at different times during courses. This was because it was expected that the reasons students withdrew may be dependent on the time at which they withdrew. Despite an intuitive expectation that the differences for withdrawal differ over time, West et al reported that little research has been done on this question. They quote from a paper by Tinto (1985)

...past research has...implicitly assumed that the process of student leaving is unchanged over the course of the student career, that the events which shape departure at one part of the student career are similar to those which lead to departure at another part of that career...(p.61).

West et al found that the reasons why students withdraw were consistent across the complete time span. It is possible to find a student withdrawing later for the same set of reasons as another student withdrew earlier. There were, however, some systematic changes in the strength of certain reasons at different times.

- . Reasons relating to the course, the institutions or academic preparedness decline over time with them becoming secondary to finance and job reasons. Among earlier withdrawers there is a high level of alienation caused by a range of factors - being in the wrong course, finding the institution cold and impersonal, being poorly prepared.
- . Finance and job-related reasons have increased to a position of prime importance for later withdrawers.
- . The need to take a break from study is a factor of declining importance as students proceed through their courses.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 The methodology in outline

The methodology developed was designed to enable direct comparisons with the findings of West et al (1986). Three questionnaires (early withdrawers, late withdrawers and persisters) were administered and selected respondents were interviewed. The questionnaires were analysed, results assessed, conclusions drawn and recommendations made.

3.2 The development of the questionnaires

Three very similar questionnaires were prepared:

- (a) early withdrawers - withdrew in the period January 1 to May 16, 1986 (Appendix A).
- (b) late withdrawers - withdrew in the period between May 127 and October 30, 1986 (Appendix B).
- (c) persisters still on course at October 31, 1986 (Appendix C).

They were designed to find out why students discontinue their studies, how these reasons change over time and to identify the problems faced and overcome by students who persist. In particular they were to test the proposition of Mitchell (1974) that persisters are more able to identify their problems and to separate them from other worries.

Each questionnaire was based on that of West et al (1986) who had conducted a study of early withdrawal of full-time students in higher education. As comparison between the results of the current study and those of West et al was one of the aims of this project, similar questionnaires would allow for similar analyses.

The questionnaires were developed in four stages:

. Stage One

The West et al survey was modified minimally to make it appropriate for part-time TAFE student withdrawers in stream 3300, 3400 and 3500 courses.

The draft survey document was circulated to all States and Territories for comment. Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria and Tasmania were visited and discussions held with TAFE administrators, researchers and college staff (including external studies lecturers).

. Stage Two

The draft survey document was revised extensively in order to incorporate the suggestions received in the above discussions as well as those from the Steering Committee.

This second draft document was circulated widely again for comment.

. Stage Three

A refinement stage, largely concerned with clarity and simplicity, was undertaken. This refined document was trialled with a selected group of students to test understanding and the time required for completion. The trial group included both men and women, people for whom English was not a first language as well as those for whom it was and students from different courses.

. Stage Four

The final document was determined. This final document, while still based heavily on that of West et al, focused on encouraging respondents to complete it as a contribution to improving the TAFE product. The questions were designed to ensure ready comprehension and simplicity of response and to provide ease of analysis. Respondents were expected to respond in detail only to those factors which they considered important or very important.

3.3 The nature of the questionnaires

The two withdrawers questionnaires sought to establish first whether the respondent was part of the sample. It stated that, according to TAFE records in 1986, the student had started a part-time TAFE certificate course or the equivalent and had now left that course.

The student was asked which of the following best described the reason for leaving:

- . I discontinued studies;
- . I changed to full-time in the same course in 1986;

- . I changed to full-time on another course in 1986;
- . I changed to part-time in another course in 1986.

Only the first reason made the respondent part of the sample. In the last three cases, the respondent was asked to put the questionnaire in the pre-paid envelope and return it without further comment.

The researchers were very conscious of the criticisms which had been directed at purely student-oriented studies of attrition and the danger of drawing too wide-reaching conclusions based on this information alone. Accordingly the personal information, that is background and defining variables, sought was limited.

The West et al (1986) survey examined the effects on the decision to withdraw or persist of eleven factors all of which are consistent with the conceptual model of drop-out used in the current study. The survey in this study was based upon these factors but they were added to, deleted and modified in a number of ways:

(a) Factors added:

(i) Achievement of student objective

It was most important that the hypothesis that most students leave (as distinct from drop out of) courses, because they have achieved their own personal objectives, be tested.

Accordingly respondents were asked whether the studies completed had enabled them to get a job, a pay increase, entry to another course or relief from boredom.

(ii) Practical matters

These were related to home and personal commitments such as whether respondents missed sports training too often, had a baby or found tasks at home impossible.

(b) Factors modified

- . 'Family' factors were modified to 'human relationship matters'.

. 'Personal decision' factors were modified to 'personal matters'.

. 'Job' factors became 'work related decisions'.

(c) Factors deleted

The factor of accommodation in the West et al (1986) survey was not used in this one.

The factors used are listed in Section 1.2(b). Each factor was presented in the questionnaire, together with a descriptive paragraph.

The factors used in the West et al (1986) survey and those used in this are compared in Table 2.

TABLE 2

FACTORS AFFECTING WITHDRAWAL OF STUDENTS. COMPARISON OF THOSE
USED BY WEST ET AL AND BY CURRENT STUDY

<u>West et al</u>	<u>Current study</u>
Course	Course - general and teaching
Institution	College/colleges
Distance/remoteness	Distance/remoteness (isolation)/travel
Finance	Finance
Health	Health
Job	Work related decisions
Chance events	Unexpected events
Academic preparedness	Academic preparedness
Personal decision	Personal matters
Accommodation	Achievement of study objectives
Family	Human relationship matters
	Practical matters

The challenge that the most important factors will remain unidentified in any research of this nature, was recognised (Section 2.3).

Those factors used were chosen on the bases of previous use (e.g. West et al, 1986) and discussion. Analysis of the results will identify those which in this study were unimportant.

As it is always possible that some important factors were not recognised, the questionnaire concluded with the statement that questionnaires are limited and do not allow respondents to give the full story. Respondents were then invited to give further details.

Withdrawers were asked to read carefully the title on each page (the factor) and the few points immediately beneath it (the associated variables) and to assess the importance of the factor in their decision to withdraw. They were asked to assess the importance of each on a three point scale - not important, important, very important. If they could not make a decision about the factor (i.e. they did not know), if they recognised that the factor was not applicable, or, if they assessed the factor as 'not important' they were asked to go straight on to the next factor.

If the factor were assessed as important or very important, respondents were asked to complete the questions related to the associated variables.

The questionnaire for the persisters approached the factors in a different way. They were presented as the reason or reasons why respondents may have:-

- . considered seriously withdrawing from the course during the year;
- . had some real concerns about the course without having seriously considered withdrawing.

Consequently, respondents were asked, regardless of whether they had seriously considered withdrawing or of whether they had some concerns about their course, to rate the factors in terms of their reducing their desire to study during the year.

The ratings and procedures were identical to those for the withdrawers.

Persisters were asked also:

- . if they had seriously considered withdrawing or, if they had had real concerns, whether they had advised the college staff; and
- . if they had advised the college staff, whether staff had helped or followed up the matter.

3.4 Interviews

All respondents were asked if they were prepared to be interviewed. It was decided that interviews would be conducted with selected respondents who seemed to have an interesting background. The intention was to give some case study background to the statistical information.

During interviews, the respondents were asked:

- . their most important reasons for enrolment;
- . the information given by the college prior to and during enrolment;
- . the assistance provided by the college during attendance;
- . the most important reasons which made the student either withdraw or consider withdrawing;
- . the advice they would give other students who were considering withdrawing.

Cope and Hannah (1975) made the point that statistical simplification erases individual human experience. They expressed it this way. Delving into the qualitative, into the realm of feeling, into the multi-faceted interaction between person and setting cannot be done without going to the students themselves to obtain their candid comments.

3.5 Administration of the questionnaires

All TAFE Authorities were asked to participate and all agreed to appoint a liaison researcher.

Sample sizes were established broadly on a pro-rata basis of State/Territory populations. The sample sizes are shown in Table 3.

TABLE 3

SAMPLE SIZES FOR EACH OF THE THREE QUESTIONNAIRES BY
STATE/TERRITORY

<u>State/Territory</u>	<u>Early</u> <u>Withdrawers</u>	<u>Later</u> <u>Withdrawers</u>	<u>Persisters</u>
NSW	1400	1030	500
Vic	1100	730	350
Qld	500	370	180
WA	450	330	160
SA	450	260	105
Tas	125	100	50
ACT	75	75	40
NT	50	45	20
	4150	2940	1405

The sample in each case was a cross-sectional one and involved sampling across institutions. It was in fact a snapshot picture.

The specification of the sample was designed to provide a representative group of respondents across the science/technology, horticulture, fashion and business fields of study and from a range of colleges. viz:

- . country/city;
- . large/small;
- . in affluent and disadvantaged area locations;
- . both in proximity to and remoteness from higher education institutions;

In addition, the sample was designed to provide:

- . a reasonable balance of male/female responses;
- . responses from a range of ethnic groups (Aboriginal, Greek, Italian, Asian);
- . a cover of a wide age range.

To ensure a reasonable response from those involved in external programs, the states and territories were requested, where possible, to direct approximately 25% of the questionnaires to these students.

Each state and territory appointed a liaison researcher who was responsible for:

- . maintaining links with the key personnel in the colleges so as to obtain details of respondents (names, addresses, telephone numbers);
- . distributing questionnaire material to potential respondents and recording details of same;
- . forwarding monthly details of potential respondents to the principal researchers.

The Liaison Officers for each state and territory are shown in Appendix D. States/territories were reimbursed for the work done by liaison officers.

Discussions across the states and territories led to the conclusion that some would want to send out the questionnaires direct from the central office to the proposed respondent while others would want to use the colleges for that purpose.

Alternative methods for distributing and recording the data were designed to meet the preference of the state or territory.

Regardless of the option of administration adopted, the questionnaire for early withdrawers (Appendix A) was distributed in early March together with an accompanying letter (Appendix E). A follow-up letter (Appendix F) was sent to those who had not responded after three weeks. A pre-paid return envelope for the return of the questionnaire was provided also.

The timetable for distribution and return is set out in Table 4.

TABLE 4
TIMETABLE FOR DISTRIBUTION AND RETURN OF QUESTIONNAIRES

<u>Questionnaire</u>	<u>Distribution date</u>	<u>Return date</u>	<u>Cut-off-date</u>
Early withdrawers	Early March	May 30	July 31
Late withdrawers	Early May	Mid-October	November 21
Persisters	Late August	November 28	December 4

Within the broad guidelines for administration laid down by the researchers, the methodology adopted in each state and territory was the responsibility of the liaison researcher.

Details of the number of questionnaires supplied to and distributed by the states/territories are shown in Table 5.

The distribution rate of the first questionnaire in South Australia was much lower than that in other States and Territories and attention was paid to this for questionnaires 2 and 3.

3.6 Statistics on distribution, processing and return of the questionnaires

Details of the number of questionnaires distributed and processed by the States/Territories are shown in Table 5.

TABLE 5

NUMBERS OF QUESTIONNAIRES DISTRIBUTED TO STUDENTS AND RETURNED AND PROCESSED BY STATE/TERRITORY

	Early withdrawers					Later withdrawers					Persisters				
State/Territory	D	R	I	P	I	D	R	I	P	I	D	R	I	P	I
New South Wales	1402	395	28.2	340	24.3	1039	388	37.3	304	29.3	502	278	55.4	265	52.8
Victoria	531	134	25.2	108	20.3	283	52	18.4	25	8.8	221	37	16.7	37	16.7
Queensland	234	83	35.5	66	28.2	189	90	47.6	44	23.3	180	91	50.6	68	37.8
South Australia	29	11	37.9	8	27.6	*	29	*	13	*	120	50	41.7	46	38.3
Western Australia	450	162	36.0	145	32.2	268	103	38.4	96	35.8	160	114	71.3	99	61.9
Tasmania	75	27	36.0	23	30.7	63	23	36.5	21	33.3	50	23	46.0	21	42.0
Northern Territory	43	18	41.9	16	37.2	33	17	51.5	15	45.5	30	16	53.3	14	46.7
Australian Capital Territory	62	25	40.3	23	37.1	52	18	34.6	13	25.0	48	33	68.8	17	35.4
Unknown		170		22			34		29			14			
TOTAL:	2826	1025	36.3	751	26.6	1927	754	39.1	560	29.1	1311	656	50.0	607	46.3

D. Distributed R. Returned P. Processed

* It has not been possible to determine the number of later withdrawal surveys distributed in South Australia.

Some questionnaires were not processed because:

- . they were returned unopened;
- . they were returned with no answer to any question in accordance with the request on the front page of the questionnaire;
- . the respondents were not in the sample, for example they had not withdrawn or had a change of status as a student (Section 3.2).

The details of questionnaires which fell in this category are given in Table 6.

TABLE 6

DETAILS OF QUESTIONNAIRES RETURNED BUT NOT PROCESSED
BY STATES/TERRITORY AND SURVEY

State/Territory	Early withdrawers			Later withdrawers			Persisters		
	NIS	RU	RTS	NIS	RU	RTS	NIS	RU	RTS
NSW	49	6	-	81	8	-	3	2	-
VIC	26	-	-	16	1	5	1	-	-
QLD	15	-	2	15	5	1	13	1	2
SA	3	-	-	4	-	3	-	-	-
WA	17	-	-	5	-	-	10	-	1
TAS	4	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	-
NT	2	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	2
ACT	2	-	-	8	1	-	2	-	-
Unknown	130	7	11	14	15	4	8	1	1
TOTAL	248	13	13	145	30	14	37	4	6

NIS Not in sample - for persisters, these were students who had withdrawn and had been sent a questionnaire in error.

RU Returned unanswered

RTS Returned to sender

In addition 41 Questionnaires 1, 81 Questionnaires 2 and 101 Questionnaires 3 were received too late for processing. That is of the 6000 + questionnaires distributed, 2658 (i.e. about 45%) were returned. This response should be considered good keeping in mind:

- (a) that mailed questionnaires frequently have a 10% response rate; and
- (b) that the population being sampled is unlikely to be highly motivated to complete a questionnaire.

3.7 Processing of the questionnaires

Most questions in each questionnaire were closed and the possible responses were coded and entered in the computer for processing.

All three questionnaires contained two open-ended questions.

Factor 12 referred to unexpected events without predicting what such events might be. Respondents were asked to identify any unexpected events which may have affected them and to rate their importance.

Responses to factor 12 included:

- . expansion of some of the variables listed in the previous questions;
- . overseas trip;
- . excessive turnover of teachers;
- . receiving overseas visitors;
- . insufficient study resources (e.g. typewriters);
- . lessons a repetition of previous courses: not sufficient exemption.

The last question arose from the fact that pre-determination of factors might lead to omission of very important ones. Respondents were asked to give more details of any circumstance not covered by the questionnaires.

Most responses to the last question elaborated on the previous twelve factors and the variables within them. However, a few responses indicated variables not suggested earlier. Examples are:

- . class disruption;
- . personal needs met by the course;
- . interactions (both positive and negative) with other age groups.
- . no provision for transfer of credit in similar courses between States - important for students in the armed services;

Both open-ended questions were content analysed and the responses grouped for coding. The coded responses were entered in the computer.

For each questionnaire the data were divided into the following groups of variables:

- . mode (college, external or college/external)
- . background variables (e.g. age, sex, work, reasons for enrolling)
- . withdrawal factors (twelve variables)
- . detailed reasons (group of variables within each factor).

The analyses were aimed primarily at determining the main groups and sub-groups present and identifying the background variables and reasons for withdrawing of each group.

The main types of analysis undertaken were:

- (a) cluster analyses of the respondents on the detailed reasons for withdrawing;
- (b) profiles for each cluster in which there may be interest on:
mode,
background variables,
major withdrawal factors,
detailed withdrawal reasons.
- (c) cross-tabulations of cluster groups and mode with:
background variables,
major withdrawal factors,
detailed withdrawal reasons.
- (d) Correlation analyses among the twelve major factors.

4. RESULTS - AN ANALYSIS OF THE QUESTIONNAIRES

4.1 Personal characteristics

4.1.1 Location of respondents

As indicated in Section 3, not all questionnaires returned were usable. Table 5 (Section 3.6) gives a dissection by State/Territory of questionnaires distributed, returned and processable.

4.1.2 Sex of respondents

TABLE 7a
SEX OF RESPONDENTS

<u>Sex</u>	<u>Early Withdrawers</u>		<u>Later Withdrawers</u>		<u>Persisters</u>	
	<u>Number</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>%</u>
Male	393	52.3	238	42.5	309	50.9
Female	326	43.4	306	54.6	292	48.1
No response	32	4.3	16	2.9	6	1.0
TOTAL:	751	100.0	560	100.0	607	100.0

Australian TAFE studies have failed so far to find any significant connections between sex and the tendency to withdraw. These results add nothing to previous information.

However there is evidence that the factors affecting withdrawal are sex related (Section 2.2.1a). Table 7b shows the importance of the factors affecting withdrawal or the desire to persist by sex for each of the surveys.

TABLE 7b
IMPORTANCE OF FACTORS AFFECTING WITHDRAWAL OR THE
DESIRE TO PERSIST BY SEX

FACTOR	FEMALE						MALE					
	Early Withdrawers n = 326		Later Withdrawers n = 326		Persisters n = 291		Early Withdrawers n = 393		Later Withdrawers n = 238		Persisters n = 309	
	X	Rank	X	Rank	X	Rank	X	Rank	X	Rank	X	Rank
Achievement of study objective	25.2	5	23.9	4	28.5	3	23.4	7	28.6	6	26.5	4
Course	48.8	1	37.6	2	30.6	1	49.1	1	44.5	2	36.2	2
College	15.0	11	14.4	10	12.4	8	10.7	12	14.3	9	14.2	9
Distance/Isolation/Travel	23.0	7	16.3	9	15.2	6	32.3	5	29.8	5	21.0	6
Human Relationships	17.5	9	16.7	8	17.9	5	21.6	8	17.6	8	23.3	5
Practical Matters	38.7	2	37.9	1	29.6	2	39.6	3	34.9	4	35.6	3
Personal Matters	16.3	10	10.8	11	7.6	11	16.0	9	13.0	10	10.4	10
Academic Preparedness	29.1	4	19.6	7	26.8	4	36.6	4	35.7	3	36.9	1
Health	18.4	8	19.9	6	10.3	10	13.5	10	9.7	12	10.4	10
Work Related Decisions	38.0	3	33.7	3	12.0	9	47.8	2	47.9	1	20.1	6
Finance	10.7	12	6.7	12	6.2	12	11.5	11	12.6	11	7.8	12
Unexpected Events	24.5	6	21.9	5	15.1	7	24.9	6	19.3	7	17.2	8

For withdrawers, these results are quite different from those reported by Cope and Hannah (1975) (Table 1) in at least two ways. First, the factors affecting withdrawal were quite different, and second, there was no substantial difference between female and male. Both sexes rated course, work-related decision and practical matters factors very highly. For persisters, the only real difference between the sexes was that lack of academic preparedness affected males more than females.

4.1.3 Home status of respondents

TABLE 8
HOME STATUS OF RESPONDENTS

<u>Home Status</u>	<u>Early Withdrawers</u>		<u>Later Withdrawers</u>		<u>Persisters</u>	
<u>Living with:</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>%</u>
Wife (Partner) & family	186	24.8	185	33.0	235	38.7
Wife (Partner)	57	7.6	86	15.4	106	17.5
Parents	216	28.8	171	30.5	145	23.9
Alone	50	6.7	47	8.4	47	7.7
Friend(s)	74	9.9	33	5.9	29	4.8
Other	54	7.2	12	2.1	31	5.1
No response	114	15.2	26	4.6	14	2.3
TOTAL:	751	100.0	560	100.0	607	100.00

Clearly 326 of the respondents to the first questionnaire (the females) were unable to say they were living with their wives or with their wives and families. It is unknown whether such respondents interpreted wives to mean husbands or replied 'other'. In the second and third questionnaires, respondents were asked if they were living with their partners or partners and families.

It would appear that students who live with their partners have a greater tendency to persist than other students.

4.1.4 Age

TABLE 9
AGE RANGE OF RESPONDENTS

<u>Age range</u>	<u>Early Withdrawers</u>		<u>Later Withdrawers</u>		<u>Persisters</u>	
	<u>Number</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>%</u>
Under 17 years	13	1.7	17	3.0	17	2.8
17 - 20 years	168	22.4	121	21.6	100	16.5
21 - 30 years	281	37.4	212	37.9	205	33.8
Over 30 years	267	35.6	202	36.1	278	45.8
No response	22	2.9	8	1.4	7	1.2
TOTAL:	751	100.0	560	100.0	607	100.0

Bean and Metzner (1985) reported that research in the United States had shown that age was not a major factor in the attrition of non-traditional students, while Tinto (1975) reported that older students are more likely to drop out than younger students even when they have earned equivalent or better grades. However in this study it appears that older students (i.e. over 30 years of age) were more likely to persist than younger students.

4.1.5 Highest level of education completed

TABLE 10
HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION COMPLETED BY RESPONDENTS

<u>Level of Education</u>	<u>Early Withdrawers</u>		<u>Later Withdrawers</u>		<u>Persisters</u>	
	<u>Number</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>%</u>
Year 9 or less	65	9.7	47	8.4	53	8.7
Year 10 or 11	304	40.5	234	41.8	236	38.9
Matriculation or Year 12	216	28.8	155	27.7	194	32.0
Post secondary Certificate	70	9.3	55	9.8	56	9.2
Degree or Diploma	68	9.9	53	9.5	55	9.1
No response	28	3.7	16	2.9	13	2.1
TOTAL:	751	99.9	560	100.0	607	100.00

There appeared to be no relation between the highest level of education completed by the respondents and the tendency to withdraw or persist. This leaves the matter of the effect of the highest level of education completed on withdrawal or persistence an open question. (Section 2.2.1 (e)).

4.1.6 Country of birth

Respondents were asked whether or not they were born in Australia.

TABLE 11
COUNTRY OF BIRTH OF RESPONDENTS

<u>Country of birth</u>	<u>Early Withdrawers</u>		<u>Later Withdrawers</u>		<u>Persisters</u>	
	<u>Number</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>%</u>
Australia	571	76.0	398	71.1	478	78.8
Outside Australia	160	21.3	146	26.1	121	19.9
No response	20	2.7	16	2.9	8	1.3
TOTAL:	751	100.0	560	100.0	607	100.0

West et al (1986) found that persisters were more likely to be born in a country other than Australia. In this study there appeared to be no relation between country of birth and withdrawal or persistence.

4.1.7 Migrant students

Respondents were asked whether they had migrant status or not.

TABLE 12
MIGRANT STATUS OF RESPONDENTS

<u>Migrant status</u>	<u>Early Withdrawers</u>		<u>Later Withdrawers</u>		<u>Persisters</u>	
	<u>Number</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>%</u>
Yes	138	18.4	108	19.3	91	15.0
No	477	63.5	345	61.6	396	65.2
No response	136	18.1	107	19.1	120	19.8
TOTAL:	751	100.0	560	100.0	607	100.0

It would appear that migrant students were less likely to persist than non-migrant students.

4.1.8 Use of language

Respondents were asked whether:

- . English was their first (or equally first) language;
- . they speak any language other than English regularly.

Then they were asked whether they rated their abilities to speak, write or read English as good, average or poor.

TABLE 13

RESPONDENTS WHO HAD ENGLISH AS A FIRST (OR EQUALLY FIRST) LANGUAGE

<u>English as a first language</u>	<u>Early Withdrawers</u>		<u>Later Withdrawers</u>		<u>Persisters</u>	
	<u>Number</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>%</u>
Yes	634	84.4	467	83.4	513	84.5
No	51	6.8	41	7.3	32	5.3
No response	66	8.8	52	9.3	62	10.2
TOTAL:	751	100.0	560	100.0	607	100.0

TABLE 14

RESPONDENTS WHO SPEAK A LANGUAGE OTHER THAN ENGLISH REGULARLY

<u>Speak language other than English</u>	<u>Early Withdrawers</u>		<u>Later Withdrawers</u>		<u>Persisters</u>	
	<u>Number</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>%</u>
Yes	101	13.4	75	13.4	65	10.7
No	554	73.8	426	76.1	454	74.8
No response	96	12.8	59	10.5	88	14.5
TOTAL:	751	100.0	560	100.0	607	100.0

TABLE 15
ABILITY TO SPEAK ENGLISH AS RATED BY RESPONDENTS

<u>Rating of ability</u>	<u>Early Withdrawers</u>		<u>Later Withdrawers</u>		<u>Persisters</u>	
	<u>Number</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>%</u>
Good	627	83.5	492	87.9	539	88.8
Average	96	12.8	54	9.6	59	9.7
Poor	5	0.7	0	0	2	0.3
No response	23	3.1	14	2.5	7	1.2
TOTAL:	751	100.0	560	100.0	607	100.0

TABLE 16
ABILITY TO WRITE ENGLISH AS RATED BY RESPONDENTS

<u>Rating of ability</u>	<u>Early Withdrawers</u>		<u>Later Withdrawers</u>		<u>Persisters</u>	
	<u>Number</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>%</u>
Good	602	80.2	460	82.1	504	83.0
Average	111	14.8	76	13.6	87	14.3
Poor	12	1.6	6	1.1	6	1.0
No response	26	3.5	18	3.2	10	1.7
TOTAL:	751	100.0	560	100.0	607	100.0

TABLE 17
ABILITY TO READ ENGLISH AS RATED BY RESPONDENTS

<u>Rating of ability</u>	<u>Early Withdrawers</u>		<u>Late Withdrawers</u>		<u>Persisters</u>	
	<u>Number</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>%</u>
Good	613	81.6	468	83.6	528	87.0
Average	101	13.4	69	12.3	60	10.0
Poor	10	1.3	2	0.4	8	1.3
No response	27	3.6	21	3.8	11	1.8
TOTAL:	751	100.0	560	100.0	607	100.0

There appeared to be a marginal tendency for students who rated their ability to speak and read English well to persist better than those who did not rate those abilities so highly.

4.1.9 Employment

Respondents were asked, if they were employed, to give a brief description of their jobs. An analysis of their responses is shown in Table 18. Of the early withdrawers, 620 (81.58%) gave a job description as did 438 (78.12%) later withdrawers and 473 (77.92%) persisters.

There was a tendency for those employed in business/secretarial occupations to withdraw from courses, while those in horticultural/rural occupations tended to persist.

One interesting aspect of these results was the relatively large group of students who were engaged in occupations which bore no relation to the course which they were undertaking. Some consequences of, or reasons for, this lack of relationship between course and employment were revealed in the interviews.

One early withdrawer reported that a career change made study irrelevant. This is one of the factors which the TAFE Council (TEC, 1978) saw as operating in student withdrawal.

Four persisters indicated that the course being undertaken was intended as a means to a career change; for example a public service clerk seeking to enter personnel and an arts graduate looking to move into secretarial work.

TABLE 18

OCCUPATIONS OF RESPONDENTS AS RELATED TO COURSE ENROLMENT

<u>Occupational group as related to course</u>	<u>Early withdrawers*</u>		<u>Later withdrawers</u>		<u>Persisters</u>	
	No	%	No	%	No	%
Science/technology	140	18.4	73	13.0	121	19.9
Horticultural/rural	10	1.3	5	0.9	32	5.8
Fashion (not hairstressing)	0	0	9	1.6	4	0.7
Business/secretarial	290	38.2	178	31.8	180	29.7
Other occupations (Related to course)	50	6.6	12	2.1	6	1.0
Other occupations (Unrelated to course)	130	17.1	161	28.8	130	21.4
No response	140	18.4	122	21.8	134	22.1
TOTAL	760	100.0	560	100.0	607	100.0

These figures were obtained by an extrapolation of a manually processed sample of early withdrawer questionnaires. Figures are rounded off.

Those who were not employed were asked if they were:

- . unemployed and registered with the C.E.S;
- . unemployed and not registered with the C.E.S;
- . engaged in full-time home duties;
- . engaged in voluntary community service either full-time or part-time.

An analysis of their responses is shown in Table 19.

TABLE 19
STATUS OF RESPONDENTS NOT IN FULL-TIME EMPLOYMENT

<u>Status</u>	<u>Early Withdrawers</u> n=751		<u>Later Withdrawers</u> n=560		<u>Persisters</u> n=607	
	Number	% of n	Number	% of n	Number	% of n
Unemployed (registered CES)	54	7.2	39	7.0	38	6.3
Unemployed (not registered)	17	2.3	11	2.0	31	5.1
Full-time home duties	75	10.0	77	13.8	80	13.2
Voluntary community service						
- full-time	2	0.3	2	0.4	2	0.3
Voluntary community service						
- part-time	29	3.9	17	3.0	28	4.6

The total of these responses and of those in employment exceed the number of processed responses. Some respondents gave more than one response.

4.1.10 Course details

Respondents were asked to name the course in which they were enrolled.

TABLE 20
COURSES IN WHICH RESPONDENTS WERE ENROLLED

<u>Nature of Course</u>	<u>Early Withdrawers</u>		<u>Later Withdrawers</u>		<u>Persisters</u>	
	<u>Number</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>%</u>
Science/Technology	157	20.9	115	20.5	151	24.9
Horticultural/rural	43	5.7	22	3.9	71	11.7
Fashion (not hairdressing)	50	6.7	78	13.9	76	12.5
Business/secretarial	367	48.9	279	49.8	272	44.8
Other	79	10.5	34	6.1	16	2.6
No response	55	7.3	32	5.7	21	3.5
TOTAL:	751	100.0	560	100.0	607	100.0

These findings are consistent with those shown in Table 18. Students enrolled in business/secretarial courses have a tendency to withdraw, while students enrolled in horticultural/rural courses have a tendency to persist.

They were then asked the number of course subjects in which they were enrolled and the number of colleges attended.

TABLE 21
NUMBER OF COURSE SUBJECTS IN WHICH RESPONDENTS WERE ENROLLED

<u>Number of subjects</u>	<u>Early Withdrawers</u>		<u>Later Withdrawers</u>		<u>Persisters</u>	
	<u>Number</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>%</u>
1	189	25.1	167	29.8	160	26.4
2	179	23.9	97	17.3	129	21.3
3	129	17.2	96	17.1	127	20.9
4	80	10.7	66	11.8	78	12.9
5	21	2.8	25	4.5	26	4.3
6	22	2.9	16	2.9	13	2.1
7	5	0.7	6	1.1	9	1.5
8	6	0.8	6	1.1	11	1.8
9	9	1.2	8	1.4	12	2.0
No response	111	14.8	73	13.0	42	6.9
TOTAL:	751	100.0	560	100.0	607	100.0

There appeared to be no relation between the number of subjects undertaken and the decision to withdraw or persist.

TABLE 22
NUMBER OF COLLEGES ATTENDED BY RESPONDENTS

<u>Number of colleges</u>	<u>Early Withdrawers</u>		<u>Later Withdrawers</u>		<u>Persisters</u>	
	<u>Number</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>%</u>
1	507	67.5	455	81.3	490	80.7
2	35	4.7	15	2.7	24	4.0
3	1	0.1	3	0.5	4	0.7
4	0	-	-	-	-	-
5	1	0.1	1	0.2	1	0.2
6	0	-	-	-	1	0.2
7	0	-	-	-	-	-
8	0	-	1	0.2	1	0.2
9	1	-	-	-	3	0.5
No response	206	27.4	85	15.2	83	13.7
TOTAL	751	100.0	560	100.0	607	100.0

By far the greatest number of respondents attended only one college and so there was no relationship between the number of colleges attended and the tendency to persist or withdraw.

Respondents were asked if they studied through college attendance, external studies (correspondence) or through multi-mode. An analysis of the responses is shown in Table 23a.

TABLE 23a
MODE OF STUDY OF THE RESPONDENTS

<u>Mode of Study</u>	<u>Early Withdrawers</u>		<u>Later Withdrawers</u>		<u>Persisters</u>	
	<u>Number</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>%</u>
College attendance	447	59.5	406	72.5	436	71.8
External studies	171	22.8	52	9.3	106	17.5
Multi-mode	82	10.9	67	12.0	57	9.4
No response	51	6.8	35	6.3	8	1.3
TOTAL:	751	100.0	560	100.0	607	100.0

Mellors (1983) had noted that withdrawal from subjects is a significant problem among external students. The design of this study was such that the results can add nothing to that comment. The sample required that approximately 25% of the questionnaires were to be directed to external students. All that can be said is that a large group of external students did not respond to the later withdrawers questionnaires.

The relative importance of the factors influencing withdrawal or the desire to persist for each mode of student for each survey is shown in Table 23b.

The factors affecting withdrawal or causing problems to persisters were not greatly different between the modes of study. College attenders and multi-mode students reported greatest difficulties with course factors while external studies reported greatest difficulties with practical matters such as the home not having suitable study facilities. In all modes of study the work related decision factors was less important to persisters than to drop-outs. The results of the current study did not confirm those of Mellors (1983) reported in Section 2.2.1(c).

TABLE 23b
IMPORTANCE OF FACTORS AFFECTING WITHDRAWAL OR THE
DESIRE TO PERSIST BY MODE OF STUDY

FACTOR	MODE OF STUDY																	
	COLLEGE ATTENDANCE						EXTERNAL STUDIES			MULTI-MODE								
	Early Withdrawers n = 447	Later Withdrawers n = 406	Persisters n = 435	Early Withdrawers n = 171	Later Withdrawers n = 52	Persisters n = 116	Early Withdrawers n = 82	Later Withdrawers n = 67	Persisters n = 57									
	X	Rank	X	Rank	X	Rank	X	Rank	X	Rank	X	Rank						
Achievement of study objective	26.4	6	28.1	4	26.2	4	23.4	6	25.0	5	26.7	3	24.4	8	20.9	7	36.8	2
Course	48.3	1	40.9	1	34.3	1	48.0	2	34.6	3	23.3	4	64.6	1	44.8	2	40.4	1
College	16.3	9	16.0	10	13.3	9	1.2	12	5.8	10	4.3	11	17.1	11	16.4	9	14.0	6
Distance/Isolation/Travel	30.4	4	24.1	6	19.8	6	17.5	9	7.7	9	12.1	8	39.0	4	20.9	7	15.8	5
Human Relationships	18.6	8	17.5	8	20.5	5	22.2	7	15.4	7	22.4	6	26.8	7	22.4	5	12.3	8
Practical Matters	34.0	3	36.7	3	32.3	2	53.8	1	48.0	1	34.5	1	45.1	2	37.3	3	22.8	4
Personal Matters	14.4	11	11.6	11	9.0	11	19.9	8	13.5	8	6.0	9	20.7	9	14.9	10	14.0	6
Academic Preparedness	28.9	5	27.3	5	31.3	3	41.5	3	28.8	4	30.2	2	40.2	3	28.4	4	33.3	3
Health	15.0	10	17.0	9	11.7	10	16.4	10	5.8	10	6.0	9	18.3	10	14.9	10	8.8	11
Work Related Decisions	46.1	2	39.4	2	13.6	8	33.3	4	42.3	2	16.4	7	39.0	4	46.3	1	12.3	8
Finance	11.9	12	10.3	12	8.3	12	10.5	11	3.8	12	2.6	12	4.9	12	13.4	12	3.1	12
Unexpected Events	23.5	7	22.7	7	14.7	7	24.0	5	23.1	6	23.3	4	28.0	6	22.4	5	10.5	10

NOTE: The percentage shown is that of the 'n' in the column.

4.2 Reasons for enrolling

Respondents were asked to indicate on a three-point scale the relative importance of certain reasons for enrolling; not important, important and very important. If the respondent did not have an answer or considered the question non-applicable they were asked to indicate that also. An analysis of the responses is given in Tables 24a, b, c.

All groups of respondents gave the same five principal reasons for enrolling, namely:

- . to obtain help in job;
- . to obtain training for a specific job;
- . to widen career options;
- . to satisfy an interest;
- . to obtain personal satisfaction.

The relative importance of each of these principal reasons for each group is shown in Table 24d.

All students enrol for fundamentally the same reasons - vocational or personal. The results show that the personal satisfaction motivation is slightly more important than vocational motivation for persisters than for withdrawers. This is consistent with the findings of Bean and Metzner (1985). It follows also that, if the students do not get what they are expecting they will be more likely to withdraw. Bachmann and Naylor (1982) reported that there appeared to be a considerable level of false expectation among students beginning courses.

These results are consistent with the explanation given in Section 4.1.9 for the fact that a number of students were in jobs unrelated to the courses they were undertaking. Principal reasons for enrolling include widening career options and personal interest.

TABLE 24a
IMPORTANCE OF VARIABLES INFLUENCING ENROLMENT
(EARLY WITHDRAWERS)

Variable	Don't Know Not applicable	Not Important	Very Important	No Response	Total
1. To please a relative or friend.					
Number.	210	385	64	10	751
Percentage	28.0	51.3	8.5	1.3	100.0
2. To help me in my job.					
Number.	93	118	232	245	751
Percentage	12.4	15.7	30.9	32.7	100.0
3. To obtain training for a specific job.					
Number.	62	176	229	218	751
Percentage.	8.3	23.4	30.5	29.0	100.0
4. To widen career options.					
Number.	34	65	229	374	751
Percentage.	4.5	8.7	30.5	49.8	100.0
5. To assist entry to another course(s).					
Number.	180	341	94	61	751
Percentage.	24.0	45.4	12.5	8.1	100.0
6. To gain a tertiary qualification.					
Number.	134	271	159	115	751
Percentage.	17.8	36.1	21.2	15.3	100.0
7. To satisfy an interest.					
Number.	62	165	308	157	751
Percentage.	8.3	22.0	41.0	20.9	100.0
8. To fill in time until I decide what to do					
Number.	257	346	39	21	751
Percentage.	34.2	46.1	5.2	2.8	100.0
9. To obtain personal satisfaction.					
Number.	44	102	327	212	751
Percentage.	5.9	13.6	43.5	28.2	100.0
10. Other.					
Number.	70	9	14	55	751
Percentage.	9.3	1.2	1.9	7.3	100.0

TABLE 24b
IMPORTANCE OF VARIABLES INFLUENCING ENROLMENT
(LATER WITHDRAWERS)

Variable	Don't Know Not applicable	Not Important	Very Important	No Response	Total
1. To please a relative or friend.					
Number.	152	277	50	12	560
Percentage	27.1	49.5	8.9	2.1	100.0
2. To help me in my job.					
Number.	72	104	162	168	560
Percentage	12.7	18.6	28.9	30.0	100.0
3. To obtain training for a specific job.					
Number.	60	131	156	156	560
Percentage.	10.7	23.4	27.9	27.9	100.0
4. To widen career options.					
Number.	35	57	160	261	560
Percentage.	6.3	10.2	28.6	46.6	100.1
5. To assist entry to another course(s).					
Number.	134	252	62	43	560
Percentage.	23.9	45.0	11.1	7.7	100.0
6. To gain a tertiary qualification.					
Number.	109	190	125	74	560
Percentage.	19.5	33.9	22.3	13.2	100.0
7. To satisfy an interest.					
Number.	33	103	248	120	560
Percentage.	5.9	18.4	44.3	21.4	100.0
8. To fill in time until I decide what to do					
Number.	189	243	36	20	560
Percentage.	33.8	43.4	6.4	3.6	100.0
9. To obtain personal satisfaction.					
Number.	25	64	230	179	560
Percentage.	4.5	11.4	41.1	32.0	100.0
10 Other					
Number	51	7	9	29	560
Percentage	9.1	1.3	1.6	5.2	100.0

TABLE 24c
IMPORTANCE OF VARIABLES INFLUENCING ENROLMENT
(PERSISTERS)

Variable	Don't Know Not applicable	Not Important	Very Important	No Response	Total
1. To please a relative or friend.					
Number.	208	307	37	12	607
Percentage	34.3	50.6	6.1	2.0	100.0
2. To help me in my job.					
Number.	104	78	134	235	607
Percentage	17.1	12.9	25.4	38.7	100.0
3. To obtain training for a specific job.					
Number.	74	118	144	233	607
Percentage.	12.2	19.4	23.7	38.4	100.0
4. To widen career options.					
Number.	31	44	123	361	607
Percentage.	8.4	7.3	20.3	59.3	100.0
5. To assist entry to another course(s).					
Number.	141	252	113	97	607
Percentage.	23.2	41.5	18.6	9.4	100.0
6. To gain a tertiary qualification.					
Number.	131	192	139	111	607
Percentage.	21.6	31.6	22.9	18.3	100.0
7. To satisfy an interest.					
Number.	32	98	268	183	607
Percentage.	5.3	16.1	44.2	30.2	100.0
8. To fill in time until I decide what to do					
Number.	249	267	32	11	607
Percentage.	41.0	44.0	5.3	1.8	100.0
9. To obtain personal satisfaction.					
Number.	28	60	237	257	607
Percentage.	4.6	9.9	39.0	42.3	100.0
10 Other					
Number	67	4	8	51	607
Percentage	11.0	0.7	1.3	8.4	100.0

TABLE 24d

RESPONDENTS WHO CONSIDERED THE FIVE PRINCIPAL REASONS FOR ENROLLING AS IMPORTANT OR VERY IMPORTANT BY PERCENTAGE AND SURVEY.

Reasons for Enrolling	Early withdrawers survey n=751		Later withdrawers survey n=560		Persisters survey n=607	
	%	Rank	%	Rank	%	Rank
To obtain a job	63.6	3	58.9	4	64.1	4
To obtain training for a specific job	59.5	5	55.7	5	62.2	5
To widen career options	80.3	1	75.2	1	79.7	2
To satisfy an interest	61.9	4	65.7	3	74.3	3
To obtain personal satisfaction	71.8	2	73.0	2	81.4	1

The interviews confirmed the principal reasons for enrolling as indicated by the surveys. Nearly every person interviewed had a vocational reason for enrolling, but most also expressed an interest in what they had decided to study.

4.3 Sources of information about courses

Respondents were asked to rate the importance of various pre-selected sources of information about courses. The method of rating was the same as in Section 4.2. The results are shown in Tables 25 a, b, c.

All groups of respondents gave the same two principal sources of information about the courses in which they enrolled, namely TAFE information services or publicity and former or current TAFE students. Overall, six of the suggested sources of information were considered by all respondents to be more important than the others. The relative importance of these six reasons for each group is shown in Table 25d.

TABLE 25a
IMPORTANCE OF VARIABLES RELATING TO SOURCES OF
COURSE INFORMATION (EARLY WITHDRAWERS)

Variable	Don't Know Not applicable	Not Important	Very Important	No Response	Total
Major Daily newspapers					
Number	240	251	93	67	100 751
Percentage	32.0	33.4	12.4	8.9	13.3 100.0
Sunday papers					
Number	274	298	33	18	128 751
Percentage	36.5	39.7	4.4	2.4	17.0 100.0
Regional or municipal papers					
Number	235	275	80	54	107 751
Percentage	31.3	36.6	10.7	7.2	14.3 100.0
Television					
Number	267	302	42	23	117 751
Percentage	35.6	40.2	5.6	3.1	15.6 100.0
TAFE information services or publicity					
Number	140	160	207	146	98 751
Percentage	18.6	21.3	27.6	19.4	13.1 100.0
TAFE career/vocational counselling					
Number	225	265	87	51	123 751
Percentage	23.0	35.3	11.6	6.8	16.4 100.0
TAFE teaching staff					
Number	216	239	105	74	117 751
Percentage	28.8	31.8	14.0	9.9	15.6 100.0
Former or current TAFE Student(s)					
Number	178	206	162	91	114 751
Percentage	23.7	27.4	21.6	12.1	15.2 100.0
Your own experiences in TAFE					
Number	219	212	121	84	115 751
Percentage	29.2	28.2	16.1	11.2	15.3 100.0
School careers advisers or staff					
Number	296	237	65	41	112 751
Percentage	39.4	31.6	8.7	5.5	14.9 100.0
Government career services					
Number	289	262	55	24	121 751
Percentage	38.5	34.9	7.3	3.2	16.1 100.0
Other Commonwealth or State Government department					
Number	283	270	41	36	121 751
Percentage	37.7	36.0	5.5	4.8	16.1 100.0
Parents/relative					
Number	265	238	75	49	124 751
Percentage	35.3	31.7	10.0	6.5	16.5 100.0
Local learning centre					
Number	284	285	42	10	130 751
Percentage	37.8	38.0	5.6	1.3	17.3 100.0
Someone at work					
Number	11	210	115	97	118 751
Percentage	28.1	28.0	15.3	12.9	15.7 100.0
Friends(s)					
Number	202	218	138	79	114 751
Percentage	26.9	29.0	18.4	10.5	15.2 100.0

TABLE 25b
IMPORTANCE OF VARIABLES RELATING TO SOURCES OF
COURSE INFORMATION (LATER WITHDRAWERS)

Variable	Don't Know Not applicable	Not Important	Important	Very Important	No Response	Total
Major Daily newspapers						
Number	146	199	68	65	82	560
Percentage	26.1	35.5	12.1	11.6	14.6	100.0
Sunday papers						
Number	161	233	36	15	115	560
Percentage	28.8	41.6	6.4	2.7	20.5	100.0
Regional or municipal papers						
Number	154	190	74	47	95	560
Percentage	27.5	33.9	13.2	8.4	17.0	100.0
Television						
Number	182	231	38	15	94	560
Percentage	32.5	41.3	6.8	2.7	16.8	100.0
TAFE information services or publicity						
Number	87	103	159	118	93	560
Percentage	15.5	18.4	28.4	21.1	16.6	100.0
TAFE career/vocational counselling						
Number	153	202	36	46	103	560
Percentage	27.3	36.1	10.0	8.2	18.4	100.0
TAFE teaching staff						
Number	125	172	91	69	103	560
Percentage	22.3	30.7	16.3	12.3	18.4	100.0
Former or current TAFE Student(s)						
Number	118	167	109	72	94	560
Percentage	21.1	29.8	19.5	12.9	16.8	100.0
Your own experiences in TAFE						
Number	138	150	108	65	99	560
Percentage	24.6	26.8	19.3	11.6	17.7	100.0
School careers advisers or staff						
Number	193	178	51	38	100	560
Percentage	34.5	31.8	9.1	6.8	17.9	100.0
Government career services						
Number	200	193	40	22	105	560
Percentage	35.7	34.5	7.1	3.9	18.8	100.0
Other Commonwealth or State Government department						
Number	193	204	40	22	101	560
Percentage	34.5	36.4	7.1	3.9	18.0	100.0
Parents/relative						
Number	168	187	60	37	108	560
Percentage	30.0	33.4	10.7	6.6	19.3	100.0
Local learning centre						
Number	201	210	36	2	110	560
Percentage	35.9	37.5	6.4	0.5	19.6	100.0
Someone at work						
Number	156	160	84	61	99	560
Percentage	27.9	28.6	15.0	10.9	17.7	100.0
Friends(s)						
Number	145	160	100	63	92	560
Percentage	25.9	28.6	17.9	11.3	16.4	100.0

TABLE 25c
IMPORTANCE OF VARIABLES RELATING TO SOURCES OF
COURSE INFORMATION (PERSISTERS)

Variable	Don't Know Not applicable	Not Important	Important	Very Important	No Response	Total
Major Daily newspapers						
Number	211	199	69	68	60	607
Percentage	34.8	32.8	11.4	11.2	9.9	100.0
Sunday papers						
Number	243	240	24	13	85	607
Percentage	40.0	39.5	4.0	2.3	14.0	100.0
Regional or municipal papers						
Number	204	221	47	61	74	607
Percentage	33.6	36.4	7.7	10.1	12.2	100.0
Television						
Number	255	232	30	11	79	607
Percentage	42.0	38.2	4.9	1.8	13.0	100.0
TAFE information services or publicity						
Number	119	144	142	144	58	607
Percentage	19.6	23.7	23.4	23.7	9.6	100.0
TAFE career/vocational counselling						
Number	222	221	33	33	76	607
Percentage	36.6	36.4	5.7	5.8	12.5	100.0
TAFE teaching staff						
Number	174	183	96	86	68	607
Percentage	28.7	30.2	15.8	14.2	11.2	100.0
Former or current TAFE Student(s)						
Number	158	132	139	94	64	607
Percentage	26.0	23.0	22.9	15.5	10.5	100.0
Your own experiences in TAFE						
Number	186	177	99	71	74	607
Percentage	30.6	29.2	16.3	11.7	12.2	100.0
School careers advisers or staff						
Number	276	181	43	34	73	607
Percentage	45.5	29.8	7.1	5.6	12.0	100.0
Government career services						
Number	288	201	26	17	73	607
Percentage	47.5	33.1	4.3	2.8	12.4	100.0
Other Commonwealth or State Government department						
Number	281	208	21	21	76	607
Percentage	46.3	34.3	3.5	3.5	12.5	100.0
Parents/relative						
Number	241	186	64	38	78	607
Percentage	39.7	30.6	10.5	6.3	12.9	100.0
Local learning centre						
Number	267	213	19	18	88	607
Percentage	44.0	35.4	3.1	3.0	14.5	100.0
Someone at work						
Number	196	142	91	97	81	607
Percentage	32.3	23.4	15.0	16.0	13.3	100.0
Friends(s)						
Number	178	152	115	93	67	607
Percentage	29.3	25.0	19.0	13.7	11.0	100.0

TABLE 25d

RESPONDENTS WHO CONSIDERED THE SIX PRINCIPAL SOURCES OF INFORMATION AS IMPORTANT OR VERY IMPORTANT BY PERCENTAGE AND SURVEY.

Source of Information	Early withdrawers survey n=751		Later withdrawers survey n=560		Persisters survey n=607	
	%	Rank	%	Rank	%	Rank
TAFE information services or publicity	47.0	1	49.5	1	47.1	1
TAFE teaching staff	23.8	6	28.6	5	30.0	4
Former or current TAFE students	33.7	2	32.3	2	38.4	2
Own experiences in TAFE	27.3	5	30.9	3	28.0	6
Someone at work	28.2	4	25.9	6	29.4	5
Friends	28.9	3	29.1	4	34.6	3

There is no indication that the source of information has any effect on the decision to withdraw or persist.

4.4 Enrolment procedures

TABLE 26
LENGTH OF TIME BETWEEN ENROLLING AND STARTING COURSE

<u>Length of time</u>	<u>Early Withdrawers</u>		<u>Later Withdrawers</u>		<u>Persisters</u>	
	<u>Number</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>%</u>
1-6 days	187	24.9	137	24.5	125	20.6
1-4 weeks	390	51.9	323	57.7	358	59.0
1-4 months	128	17.0	61	10.9	95	15.7
4-8 months	10	1.3	11	2.0	9	1.5
8-12 months	2	0.3	2	0.4	2	0.3
Longer	5	0.7	3	0.5	3	0.5
No response	29	3.9	23	4.1	15	2.5
TOTAL:	751	100.0	560	100.0	607	100.0

Nearly 80% of the respondents to each survey started their courses within four weeks of enrolling. There appeared to be no relation between withdrawal or persistence and time interval between enrolling in and starting a course.

TABLE 27
REPORTED PROVISION OF INFORMATION ON COSTS BY COLLEGE STAFF
TO RESPONDENTS

<u>Information on costs given</u>	<u>Early Withdrawers</u>		<u>Later Withdrawers</u>		<u>Persisters</u>	
	<u>Number</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>%</u>
Yes	561	74.7	421	75.2	487	80.2
No	154	20.5	110	19.6	107	17.6
No response	36	4.8	29	5.2	13	2.1
TOTAL:	751	100.0	560	100.0	607	100.0

TABLE 28
REPORTED PROVISION OF INFORMATION ON OBLIGATIONS FOR
ATTENDING CLASSES BY COLLEGE STAFF TO RESPONDENTS

<u>Information on</u> <u>costs given</u>	<u>Early Withdrawers</u>		<u>Later Withdrawers</u>		<u>Persisters</u>	
	<u>Number</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>%</u>
Yes	505	67.2	416	74.3	466	76.8
No	194	25.8	108	19.3	127	20.9
No response	52	6.9	36	6.4	14	2.3
TOTAL:	751	100.0	560	100.0	607	100.0

TABLE 29
REPORTED PROVISION OF INFORMATION ON OBLIGATIONS FOR
COMPLETING COURSE ASSIGNMENTS BY COLLEGE STAFF TO
RESPONDENTS

<u>Information</u> <u>provided</u>	<u>Early Withdrawers</u>		<u>Later Withdrawers</u>		<u>Persisters</u>	
	<u>Number</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>%</u>
Yes	574	76.4	429	76.6	499	82.2
No	144	19.2	101	18.0	97	16.0
No response	33	4.4	30	5.4	11	100.0
TOTAL:	751	100.0	560	100.0	607	100.0

TABLE 30
REPORTED PROVISION OF INFORMATION ON OBLIGATIONS FOR
REGULAR STUDY BY COLLEGE STAFF TO RESPONDENTS

<u>Information</u> <u>provided</u>	<u>Early Withdrawers</u>		<u>Later Withdrawers</u>		<u>Persisters</u>	
	<u>Number</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>%</u>
Yes	560	74.6	410	73.2	454	74.8
No	156	20.8	119	21.3	135	22.2
No response	35	4.7	31	5.5	18	3.0
TOTAL:	751	100.0	560	100.0	607	100.0

TABLE 31
REPORTED PROVISION OF INFORMATION BY COLLEGE STAFF ON THE
RESOURCES AND SERVICES THE COLLEGE PROVIDED TO HELP
RESPONDENTS COMPLETE THEIR STUDIES SUCCESSFULLY

<u>Information provided</u>	<u>Early Withdrawers</u>		<u>Later Withdrawers</u>		<u>Persisters</u>	
	<u>Number</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>%</u>
Yes	506	67.4	361	64.5	451	74.3
No	200	26.6	165	29.5	142	23.4
No response	45	6.0	34	6.1	14	2.3
TOTAL:	751	100.0	560	100.0	607	100.0

TABLE 32
REPORTED PROVISION OF INFORMATION BY COLLEGE STAFF ON THE
RESOURCES AND SERVICES THE COLLEGE PROVIDED TO HELP
RESPONDENTS KNOW WHERE TO SEEK ADVICE

<u>Information provided</u>	<u>Early Withdrawers</u>		<u>Later Withdrawers</u>		<u>Persisters</u>	
	<u>Number</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>%</u>
Yes	432	57.5	320	57.1	378	62.3
No	264	35.2	197	35.2	209	34.4
No response	55	7.3	43	7.7	20	3.3
TOTAL:	751	100.0	560	100.0	607	100.0

TABLE 33
REPORTED PROVISION OF INFORMATION BY COLLEGE STAFF ON THE
RESOURCES AND SERVICES THE COLLEGE PROVIDED TO HELP
RESPONDENTS FEEL AT EASE IN THE COLLEGE

<u>Information provided</u>	<u>Early Withdrawers</u>		<u>Later Withdrawers</u>		<u>Persisters</u>	
	<u>Number</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>%</u>
Yes	431	57.4	327	58.4	398	65.6
No	247	32.9	191	34.1	182	30.0
No response	73	3.7	42	7.5	27	4.5
TOTAL:	751	100.0	560	100.0	607	100.0

As a broad generalisation, persisters reported that they had been given information on the obligations of students and the resources and services available at enrolment. The subject of information given at enrolment was raised by only one interviewee - a persister. He commented that he had a talk to the lecturer at the time he enrolled.

4.5 Advice on deciding to withdraw

Persisters were asked whether they had seriously considered withdrawing. The responses are shown in Table 34.

TABLE 34
RESPONSES OF PERSISTERS TO QUESTIONS REGARDING WITHDRAWING

	Number	%
Seriously considered withdrawing	79	13.0
Some real concerns, but did not consider withdrawing	179	29.5
No concerns; did not consider withdrawing	333	54.9
No response	16	2.6
TOTAL:	607	100.0

That is 258 persisters (42.6%) had some real concerns about their courses.

Both early and later withdrawers and those persisters who had some real concerns about their courses were asked a number of questions about the assistance given to them by the colleges. The responses are shown in Tables 35-39.

TABLE 35
NOTICE GIVEN TO COLLEGES BY WITHDRAWERS OF
INTENTION TO WITHDRAW

<u>Notice given</u>	<u>Early Withdrawers</u>		<u>Later Withdrawers</u>		<u>Persisters</u>	
	<u>Number</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>%</u>
Yes	308	41.0	252	45.0	77	29.7
No	421	56.1	289	51.6	181	70.3
No response	22	2.9	19	3.4	-	-
TOTAL:	751	100.0	560	100.0	258	100.0

TABLE 36
ASSISTANCE GIVEN TO RESPONDENTS BY COLLEGE STAFF IN HELPING
THEM MAKE THE DECISION TO WITHDRAW

<u>Assistance given</u>	<u>Early Withdrawers</u> <u>Number</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Later Withdrawers</u> <u>Number</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Persisters</u> <u>Number</u>	<u>%</u>
Yes	60	8.0	50	8.9	52	67.5
No	658	87.6	479	85.5	21	27.3
No response	33	4.4	31	5.5	4	5.2
TOTAL:	751	100.0	560	100.0	77	100.0

TABLE 37
RESPONDENTS CONTACTED BY COLLEGE STAFF CONCERNING
WITHDRAWALS

<u>Respondents Contacted</u>	<u>Early Withdrawers</u> <u>Number</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Later Withdrawers</u> <u>Number</u>	<u>%</u>
Yes	84	11.2	84	15.0
No	637	84.8	442	78.9
No response	30	4.0	34	6.1
TOTAL:	751	100.0	560	100.0

TABLE 38
COLLEGE STAFF PROVIDED ASSISTANCE TO RESPONDENTS WITH
ANY PROBLEMS

<u>Assistance Provided</u>	<u>Early Withdrawers</u> <u>Number</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Later Withdrawers</u> <u>Number</u>	<u>%</u>
Yes	65	8.7	63	11.3
No	633	84.3	451	80.5
No response	53	7.1	46	8.2
TOTAL:	751	100.0	560	100.0

TABLE 39
COLLEGE STAFF ENCOURAGED RESPONDENTS TO CONTINUE
WITH STUDIES*

<u>Encouragement provided</u>	<u>Early Withdrawers</u>		<u>Later Withdrawers</u>		<u>Persisters</u>	
	<u>Number</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>%</u>
Yes	89	11.9	91	16.3	37	48.1
No	623	83.0	429	76.6	35	45.5
No response	39	5.2	40	7.1	5	6.5
TOTAL:	751	100.0	560	100.0	77	100.0

*The question for persisters was whether any member of staff followed up the problems with respondents later.

Over 40% of the respondents to both withdrawer surveys advised the college of their intention to withdraw, whereas less than 30% of the persisters who had difficulties with their courses, advised the college staff. But fewer than 10% of withdrawers were given any assistance in making their decision, while over 60% of persisters were. It was reported in Section 2.2.2(a)(v) that a number of studies has shown that satisfaction with student/staff relationships was a contributing factor to retention. It would appear that, when a student advises a staff member of problems which could lead to withdrawal, prompt action to assist will reduce withdrawal. The evidence suggests that, at present, this action is not taken as often as it should be.

4.6 Factors influencing withdrawals

Bath (1986) reported that those studies which have compared a sample population of withdrawers with a sample population of persisters have reported generally that the factors found to be associated with withdrawal are also prominent among the difficulties reported by persisters. These findings have been confirmed in the current study. (Table 40 a, b, c).

All three groups reported that problems with their courses were the most important in influencing their decision to withdraw or were an important obstacle to their persistence. The problems were less important the longer the students persisted.

TABLE 40a
IMPORTANCE OF FACTORS INFLUENCING EARLY WITHDRAWERS

Variable	Don't Know Not applicable	Not Important	Important	Very Important	No Response	Total
1. Achievement of study objective.						
Number.	273	211	130	49	88	751
Percentage.	36.4	28.1	17.3	6.5	11.7	100.0
2. Course (General and teaching).						
Number.	183	151	210	150	57	751
Percentage.	24.4	20.1	28.0	20.0	7.6	100.0
3. College/Colleges.						
Number.	329	258	58	36	70	751
Percentage.	43.8	34.4	7.7	4.8	9.3	100.0
4. Distance/remoteness (isolation)/travel.						
Number.	274	212	106	101	58	751
Percentage.	36.5	28.2	14.1	13.5	7.7	100.0
5. Human relationship matters.						
Number.	313	230	95	51	62	751
Percentage.	41.7	30.6	12.7	6.8	8.3	100.0
6. Practical matters. (related to home/personal commitments).						
Number.	235	167	160	133	56	751
Percentage.	31.3	22.3	21.3	17.7	7.5	100.0
7. Personal matters.						
Number.	331	231	67	46	67	751
Percentage.	44.1	30.8	10.1	6.1	8.9	100.0
8. Academic preparedness.						
Number.	266	185	160	83	57	751
Percentage.	35.4	24.6	21.3	11.1	7.6	100.0
9. Health.						
Number.	350	216	51	66	68	751
Percentage.	46.6	28.8	6.8	8.8	9.1	100.0
10. Work related decisions.						
Number.	236	130	118	205	62	751
Percentage.	31.4	17.3	15.7	27.3	8.3	100.0
11. Finance.						
Number.	361	229	47	35	79	751
Percentage.	48.1	30.5	6.3	4.7	10.5	100.0
12. Unexpected events.						
Number.	239	129	57	134	192	751
Percentage.	31.8	17.2	7.6	17.8	25.6	100.0

TABLE 40b
IMPORTANCE OF FACTORS INFLUENCING LATER WITHDRAWERS

Variable	Don't Know Not applicable	Not Important	Important	Very Important	No Response	Total
1. Achievement of study objective.						
Number.	192	159	100	45	64	560
Percentage.	34.3	28.4	17.9	8.0	11.4	100.0
2. Course (General and teaching).						
Number.	146	118	128	98	70	560
Percentage.	26.1	21.1	22.9	17.5	12.5	100.0
3. College/Colleges.						
Number.	220	184	46	36	74	560
Percentage.	39.3	32.9	8.2	6.4	13.2	100.0
4. Distance/remoteness (isolation)/travel.						
Number.	209	169	66	57	59	560
Percentage.	37.3	30.2	11.8	10.2	10.5	100.0
5. Human relationship matters.						
Number.	227	176	57	39	61	560
Percentage.	40.5	31.4	10.2	7.0	10.9	100.0
6. Practical matters. (related to home/personal commitments).						
Number.	169	124	126	79	62	560
Percentage.	30.2	22.1	22.5	14.1	11.1	100.0
7. Personal matters.						
Number.	241	193	44	21	61	560
Percentage.	43.0	34.5	7.9	3.8	10.0	100.0
8. Academic preparedness.						
Number.	212	137	105	44	62	560
Percentage.	37.9	24.5	18.8	7.9	11.1	100.0
9. Health.						
Number.	254	162	38	48	58	560
Percentage.	45.4	28.9	6.8	8.6	10.4	100.0
10. Work related decisions.						
Number.	172	97	96	126	69	560
Percentage.	30.8	17.4	17.2	22.5	12.4	100.0
11. Finance.						
Number.	279	169	35	19	58	560
Percentage.	49.8	30.2	6.3	3.4	10.4	100.0
12. Unexpected events.						
Number.	157	167	119	40	81	560
Percentage.	27.3	29.8	21.3	7.1	14.5	100.0

TABLE 40c
IMPORTANCE OF FACTORS CREATING DIFFICULTIES FOR PERSISTERS

Variable	Don't Know Not applicable	Not Important	Important	Very Important	No Response	Total
1. Achievement of study objective.						
Number.	206	205	101	66	29	607
Percentage.	34.0	33.8	16.7	10.9	4.8	100.0
2. Course (General and teaching).						
Number.	190	174	144	60	39	607
Percentage.	31.3	28.7	23.7	10.0	6.4	100.0
3. College/Colleges.						
Number.	254	233	58	23	39	607
Percentage.	41.9	38.4	9.6	3.8	6.4	100.0
4. Distance/remoteness (isolation)/travel.						
Number.	242	223	71	38	33	607
Percentage.	39.9	36.7	11.70	6.3	5.4	100.0
5. Human relationship matters.						
Number.	230	222	88	37	30	607
Percentage.	37.9	36.6	14.5	6.1	4.9	100.0
6. Practical matters. (related to home/personal commitments).						
Number.	191	184	144	52	36	607
Percentage.	31.5	30.3	23.7	8.6	5.9	100.0
7. Personal matters.						
Number.	277	238	44	10	38	607
Percentage.	45.6	39.2	7.3	1.7	6.3	100.0
8. Academic preparedness.						
Number.	199	187	151	41	29	607
Percentage.	32.8	30.8	24.9	6.8	4.8	100.0
9. Health.						
Number.	312	203	41	22	29	607
Percentage.	51.4	33.4	6.8	3.6	4.8	100.0
10. Work related decisions.						
Number.	293	183	57	40	34	607
Percentage.	48.3	30.2	9.4	6.6	5.6	100.0
11. Finance.						
Number.	307	225	30	12	33	607
Percentage.	50.6	37.1	4.9	2.0	5.4	100.0
12. Unexpected events.						
Number.	251	173	55	42	86	607
Percentage.	41.4	28.5	9.1	6.9	14.2	100.0

The only factor where there was a large difference between withdrawers and persisters was the work related factor. This was a much more important reason for withdrawing than it was a problem for persisters.

The relative importance of each of these factors for each group is shown in Table 40d.

These results can be compared with those reported by West et al (1986) (Section 2.4) who found that reasons for considering, or actually withdrawing relating to the course, institution or academic preparedness declined over time and became secondary to problems arising from finance and job reasons. The current study obtained the same results only in part. The importance of course and academic preparedness reasons was less for later withdrawers than early withdrawers, but did not become secondary to reasons associated with finance or vocation. In fact 'job' reasons were important to both early and later withdrawers, if rather less so to the latter.

4.6.1 Correlation between the factors

The correlation between each of the twelve variables was calculated. Only seven of 66 exceeded 0.2 and of these the highest correlation coefficient was 0.31 for the factors human relationship matters and practical matters. Overall, the correlations among the factors were low to very low (ranging from 0.31 to - 0.18). This indicates that the twelve factors used in the questionnaire are largely independent and helps to confirm the validity of their choice.

In summary, the most important reasons for withdrawing, i.e. work-related decisions, course matters and practical matters related to home or personal commitments largely stood alone.

TABLE 40d

RESPONDENTS WHO CONSIDERED THE FACTORS AFFECTING WITHDRAWING
OR CONSIDERING WITHDRAWING AS IMPORTANT OR VERY
IMPORTANT BY PERCENTAGE AND SURVEY

Factor affecting withdrawing or considering withdrawing	Early withdrawers survey n =751		Later withdrawers survey n=560		Persisters survey n=607	
	%	Rank	%	Rank	%	Rank
Achievement of study objective	23.8	7	25.9	6	25.6	4
Course (general and teaching	47.9	1	40.4	1	33.6	1
Distance, remoteness (isolation), travel	27.6	5	22.0	7	18.0	6
Practical matters	39.1	3	36.6	3	32.3	2
Academic preparedness	32.4	4	26.6	5	31.6	3
Work related decisions	43.0	2	39.7	2	16.0	7
Unexpected events	25.4	6	28.4	4	16.0	7
College/colleges	11.5	11	14.6	10	12.4	9
Human relationship matters	19.4	8	17.1	8	20.6	5
Personal matters	16.3	9	11.6	11	8.9	11
Health	15.6	10	14.7	9	9.4	10
Finance	10.9	12	9.6	12	5.9	12

4.7 The variables within the factors

4.7.1 Course (general and teaching)

Those respondents who considered this factor to be important or very important were asked to rate the importance of the sixteen variables within that factor. An analysis of the responses is given in Table 41.

The most important variable within the course (general and teaching) factor for each survey was that the teaching methods did not stimulate the interest of the students. Such comments from students who withdrew from courses might not be unexpected, but it was also the principal reason why those who persisted might have withdrawn. One respondent who was interviewed summed her lecturer up as 'hopeless'.

This finding is consistent with those reported by MacDonald (1984) who suggested that if the teaching is stimulating, relevant and involving, it is likely to promote persistence, while, if it is dull, irrelevant and alienating, it is likely to have the opposite effect. She also warns against the lecturer trying to reverse the impact of this finding by implying that the fault lies with the student. The implication here is clear: many students in TAFE are critical of the service.

For both withdrawer surveys, the three next most important variables, in order, were:

- . the course was not found interesting;
- . the course proved too difficult;
- . the teaching staff seemed disorganised.

All the above reasons for withdrawing were reflected in the interviews - one respondent gave them all. He said that the course was badly organised and too difficult. Teachers expected too much of students and went too quickly.

Persisters gave some different reasons for a reduction in their desire to study. Like withdrawers they rated highly the seeming disorganisation of the teaching staff, but then rated:

- . the course was badly organised;
- . teaching was not backed up by appropriate aids (films, handouts and so on).

TABLE 41

RESPONDENTS WHO CONSIDERED THE VARIABLES WITHIN
THE COURSE FACTOR IMPORTANT OR VERY IMPORTANT
BY PERCENTAGE AND SURVEY

Variable	Early withdrawers survey n=360		Later withdrawers survey n=226		Persisters survey n=204	
	%	Rank	%	Rank	%	Rank
Didn't find course interesting	45.0	2	47.4	2	33.8	5
Course didn't conform to publicity	14.7	14	16.8	14	11.2	16
Course badly organised	28.6	7	40.3	4	35.8	3
Course too difficult	40.3	3	43.4	3	29.4	8
Believed would fail	28.1	9	28.8	9	25.5	11
Course out of date	10.3	15	10.6	16	12.8	14
Other reasons	33.1	5	27.4	11	32.4	6
Teaching staff disorganised	33.3	4	40.3	4	46.6	2
Teachers with insufficient knowledge	16.9	13	24.8	13	30.4	7
Unstimulating teaching methods	52.5	1	67.7	1	57.4	1
Inappropriate aids	28.6	7	37.2	7	34.8	4
Teachers difficult to contact	21.1	12	27.9	10	26.5	9
Teachers uninterested in students	22.8	11	26.6	12	22.1	12
Unsatisfactory personal contact with teachers	24.4	10	38.9	6	26.0	10
Multi-mode study not available	32.2	5	31.9	8	21.6	13
Other reasons	10.0	16	13.3	15	11.8	15

These latter are a result of experience in the course and could hardly have been given by withdrawers. They contain a message for TAFE lecturers and curriculum designers.

A direct comparison with the findings of West et al (1986) is not possible as they clustered the factors by a factor analysis of the ratings of importance of their eleven factors. A cluster analysis has been undertaken in this project and a comparison of these results with those of West et al is undertaken below. Nevertheless some tentative comparisons may be interpolated.

The two groups of withdrawers in the study of West et al most comparable with those of this study are early withdrawers and final year withdrawers. Of these 38.40% and 36.44% respectively chose course related factors as the main reason for withdrawal (compared with 47.93% and 40.36% for TAFE withdrawers). West et al warn against making too much of these figures as they are based on a forced choice between factors in the questionnaire. This will make the figures lower than those obtained in the current study.

However it is clear that course factors are important reasons for withdrawal of both higher education and TAFE students.

Of the detailed variables, not finding the course interesting was rated highly as a reason for withdrawal in both surveys. On the other hand, dissatisfaction with teaching in the course did not rate high with higher education withdrawers whereas it rated most highly with those from TAFE.

West et al also found that the course not conforming to its publicity was an important problem, but it was relatively unimportant to the TAFE students in this survey. The findings of West et al were consistent with those of Bachman and Naylor (1982), who reported that many students who had withdrawn from commerce and accounting certificates in New South Wales in 1980 claimed that the course was different from their expectations. In this study, this problem did not seem to arise.

4.7.2 Work-related decisions

This factor rated highly among withdrawers, but was not nearly so important for persisters. This is not inconsistent with the findings of Naylor and Naylor (1982) and West et al (1986) who reported that persisters are more likely to rely on part-time or casual jobs. There is less tendency for them to find that work interferes with their activity than it is for those who work full-time.

However, there may be another side to the coin. Persisters may be employed full-time and have encouragement from their employers. One respondent reported in an interview that he had started work in road construction as a chainman, but following encouragement from his employers he was now a survey draftsman.

The respondents who considered this factor to be important or very important were asked to rate the importance of the twelve variables within that factor. An analysis of the responses for the two withdrawer surveys is given in Table 42. From this the situation facing most withdrawers affected by this factor is very clear. They simply were unable to combine study and work. By implication persisters have been able to do so.

4.7.3 Practical matters

This factor rated highly in all three surveys: even persisters found that matters arose which tended to discourage them from continuing study.

The respondents who considered this factor to be important or very important were asked to rate the importance of the nine variables within that factor. An analysis of the responses is given in Table 43.

Respondents who saw this factor as important or very important spoke with one voice. Whether they withdrew or persisted:

- . the mix of home, work and study;
- . the difficulty of meeting family commitments and study;
- . home jobs

made study so difficult that even persisters suffered a reduction in their desire to study.

The information from the surveys that practical matters were an important consideration to both withdrawers and persisters was also confirmed in the interviews.

One respondent (a withdrawer) commented that the mix of home, work and study proved too much for him. With coaching football and bringing up a young family, he was unable to spend up to three or four hours per week studying. Another withdrawer said that giving up golf on Saturday and evenings through the week in order to study together with his family commitments 'got to him'.

TABLE 42

RESPONDENTS TO WITHDRAWERS SURVEYS WHO CONSIDERED
VARIABLES WITHIN THE WORK RELATED DECISIONS FACTOR
TO BE IMPORTANT OR VERY IMPORTANT BY PERCENTAGE AND SURVEY

Variables	Early withdrawers survey n=323		Later withdrawers survey n=222	
	‡	Rank	‡	Rank
Got a job, made completing course unnecessary	17.7	6	19.8	5
Got a job, preventing from continuing part-time study	36.8	2	42.3	2
Promoted in job, forced to withdraw	13.9	8	16.2	7
Job transfer forced withdrawal	13.9	8	15.3	8
Changed career plans, made study irrelevant	25.4	4	25.2	4
Overtime forced student to leave course	33.8	3	28.2	3
Changes in industrial legislation made completing course unnecessary	3.1	12	1.4	12
Changes in college lecture time clashed with work time	14.9	7	18.0	6
Lost the job motivating study	4.0	11	5.4	11
No job opportunities stemming from course	9.9	10	10.4	10
Could not cope with work and study	50.8	1	55.9	1
Other	21.7	5	13.5	9

TABLE 43

RESPONDENTS WHO CONSIDERED VARIABLES WITHIN THE
PRACTICAL MATTERS FACTOR TO BE IMPORTANT OR VERY
IMPORTANT BY PERCENTAGE AND SURVEY

Variable	Early withdrawers survey n=293		Later withdrawers survey n=205		Persisters survey n=96	
	%	Rank	%	Rank	%	Rank
No suitable study facilities in home	38.9	5	30.7	5	36.2	5
Home jobs made study impossible	53.6	3	51.2	3	61.2	2
Single parenting responsibility prevented study	5.1	8	5.9	9	4.1	9
Difficulty meeting family commitments and study	57.7	2	64.4	2	56.1	3
Birth of child caused termination of studies	8.9	7	11.2	7	9.2	8
Mix of home, work and study proved too much	81.6	1	87.8	1	72.5	1
Withdrew to look after sick relative or friend	4.1	9	6.9	8	15.3	6
Study prevented taking part in social/sporting interest	43.5	4	44.9	4	50.0	4
Other reasons	20.8	6	17.6	6	10.7	7

Persisters reported similar experiences. One said that, with his wife working and children aged one and six, he was in danger of putting assignments off and got close to withdrawing. Another said that he had difficulty in keeping the children quiet and out of the way at home and so did most of his study at work.

4.7.4 Academic preparedness

This factor rated highly in all surveys. The respondents who considered this factor to be important or very important were asked to rate the importance of the seven variables within that factor. An analysis of the responses is given in Table 44.

All respondents reported similar difficulties. They had difficulties in organising study time and in establishing a study routine. They also found that their study skills were not adequate.

This contrasts with Lenning et al (1980) who found that students who withdrew described their study skills and habits as poor more often than did persisters.

Only one of those interviewed commented on lack of academic preparedness. He complained that the mathematics required in his course was beyond the stated pre-requisites and that the work to bridge the gap was covered too quickly. The blunt comment was: 'the maths kills me'. Another interviewee, when asked what advice he would give to other students, commented that potential students should assure themselves that they had sufficient study background to cope with the course. West et al reported results similar to those found in this study.

4.8 The most important problems facing students which cause them to withdraw or which became problems to persistence

When all variables are considered for all the factors, the reasons which are given as most important to students in their decisions to withdraw or as the important obstacles to persistence are shown in Table 45.

Using the conceptual model of drop-out as shown on Figure 1, the most important variables are either academic, over which the college has some control, or environmental over which it has little control.

TABLE 44

RESPONDENTS WHO CONSIDERED VARIABLES WITHIN THE
ACADEMIC PREPAREDNESS FACTOR TO BE IMPORTANT OR VERY
IMPORTANT BY PERCENTAGE AND SURVEY

Variable	Early withdrawers survey n=243		Later withdrawers survey n=149		Persisters survey n=192	
	%	Rank	%	Rank	%	Rank
Study skills not adequate	62.6	3	61.7	3	60.9	3
Difficulties in organising study time	81.1	2	87.3	1	80.7	2
Difficulties in establishing study routine	81.9	1	81.2	2	85.4	1
Lack of background knowledge and skills	56.8	4	52.3	4	43.8	4
Inadequate command of English	14.4	6	14.8	6	10.4	6
Need for preparatory course	32.1	5	32.2	5	14.6	5
Other reasons	8.6	7	7.4	7	4.7	7

TABLE 45

MOST IMPORTANT VARIABLES CAUSING WITHDRAWAL OR PROBLEMS
WITH PERSISTENCE BY PERCENTAGE OF ALL RESPONDENTS

n=1918		
	%	Nature of factor/variable
The mix of home, work and study proved too much	29.27	E
Difficulties in establishing a study routine	25.26	A
Difficulties in organising study time	25.10	A
Teaching methods did not stimulate interest	24.43	A
Too much difficulty meeting family commitments and study	21.46	E
Part of course completed enabled broadening of career options	21.10	A
Home jobs made study impossible	19.95	E
Study skills not adequate	18.34	A
Couldn't cope with work and study	17.65	E
Didn't find course interesting	17.61	A
Regular travel to college after work too demanding	17.09	B

A=Academic factor

E=Environmental factor

B=Background and defining variable
see Figure 1

These variables are quite different from those found by Astin (1977) in his study of drop-outs for American two - and four-year colleges and universities. He found that the most frequent problems were boredom with the course, financial difficulties, dissatisfaction with requirements or regulations and change in career goals.

However they are very similar to those reported by MacDonald (1984). They are:

- . conflict with demands of work;
- . change in occupation or work duties;
- . student did not work hard enough;
- . conflict with family, social or sporting activity;
- . course content was not that expected;
- . course was not interesting;
- . discouraged by employer or little prospect of promotion resulting from certificate;
- . teachers did not get the subject matter across;
- . too much time travelling to and from college;
- . withdrew to enrol on another course.

These findings raise the question of why, when faced with similar difficulties, some persist while others withdraw. A number of writers (Boshier 1973, Spady 1971, Tinto 1975) have attributed this to the degree of fit between the student and his educational environment, that is the better the degree of fit, the more likely the persistence. However the results of the current survey suggests very little difference in the impact on withdrawers or persisters of the college or of its teaching. There seems to be very little evidence that persisters have 'fitted' the college better than withdrawers.

This leads to an alternative proposition suggested by Mitchell (1974) that persisters were more able to identify their problems and separate them from their other worries, while withdrawers have a more confused appreciation of their problems. As Lenning et al (1980) put it: persistence may be related more to willingness or ability to endure dissatisfaction than to dissatisfaction as such.

The information obtained in interviews with persisters who indicated difficulties in completing their courses, was consistent with the findings of Mitchell and Lenning et al that persisters have the ability to endure dissatisfaction. One respondent who was very critical of her lecturer said that the answers she could not get in class she sought successfully from

her employer. Another, an external student, identified remoteness from his college as a problem and complained that reference books were very difficult to get. A third complained that teaching staff was very difficult to contact. Yet in every case they had endured the dissatisfaction rather than withdraw.

If the proposition of Mitchell (1974) and Lenning et al (1980) is accepted, then there must be some quality in the student which enables him to endure this dissatisfaction. In other words the argument that the reasons for persistence lie in some quality of combination of qualities in the student must be given some weight. No attempt has been made in this study to determine the ability to endure dissatisfaction as a background or defining variable. All that can be said is that students who live with their partner and are older, non-migrants with the ability to speak and read English well have a greater tendency to persist than other students. Whether these variables lead to a greater ability to endure dissatisfaction is another question.

4.8.1 The importance of the reasons for student withdrawal suggested by the TAFE Council

In Section 2, it was pointed out that the TAFE Council (TEC, 1978) had suggested that there were four possible reasons for withdrawal on which more information was needed.

- . A tendency for some students to enrol in courses on a 'try it and see' basis. The reasons given for enrolment by respondents do not suggest that this was an important consideration (Table 24d).
- . A change in employment can lead to withdrawal from a course, The information in Table 42 suggests that this is an important reason among those for whom the work-related decisions were important factors in withdrawal.
- . The pressures of part-time study on people with other commitments. This was found to be a very important reason why students had difficulty continuing their studies (Table 45).
- . Students obtained what they needed for vocational purposes before completing a full course. This also proved to be very important (Table 45).

4.9 Cluster analyses

For each of the three surveys, a cluster analysis was performed. The clustering was based on the responses to each of the 103 reasons for withdrawing (or 103 "problems that may have led to withdrawing" for the persisters survey). Respondents who are members of the same cluster therefore would have indicated similar reasons for withdrawing (or 'problems').

The method of clustering used was hierarchical and agglomerative. Thus for the survey of early withdrawers, consisting of 735 respondents, the initial step in the clustering process started with 735 clusters (each with one respondent). At the final stage a single cluster, consisting of 735 respondents, was formed. For each cluster formed the similarity percentage was calculated. This is a measure of the degree to which the responses of the members of the clusters on reasons for withdrawing (or problems for persisters) are similar. If the responses of every member of a cluster were identical, the similarity percentage would be 100%.

In reporting the results of the cluster analyses, only 'main clusters' are given. Main clusters are defined as clusters that:

- . consist of ten or more respondents;
- . do not merge with other clusters, except at the final stage when the whole sample cluster is formed.

Only main clusters are shown in Figures 2, 3 and 4. All of these main clusters break down into smaller clusters.

It should be noted that the number of respondents in the whole sample cluster is less than the sample sizes for each survey. This is because those respondents that rated none of the 103 reasons for withdrawing (or 'problems') as 'important' or 'very important' were excluded from the cluster analysis. The numbers of respondents excluded for this reason are:

- . 16 early withdrawers (2.1% of sample);
- . 46 later withdrawers (8.2% of sample);
- . 163 persisters (26.9% of sample).

In other words a significant number of persisters (26.9%) perceived that they had no study problems that could be considered important or very important. This fact was confirmed in a number of interviews.

FIGURE 2: CLUSTER DIAGRAM OF EARLY WITHDRAWER
SAMPLE (SURVEY ONE)

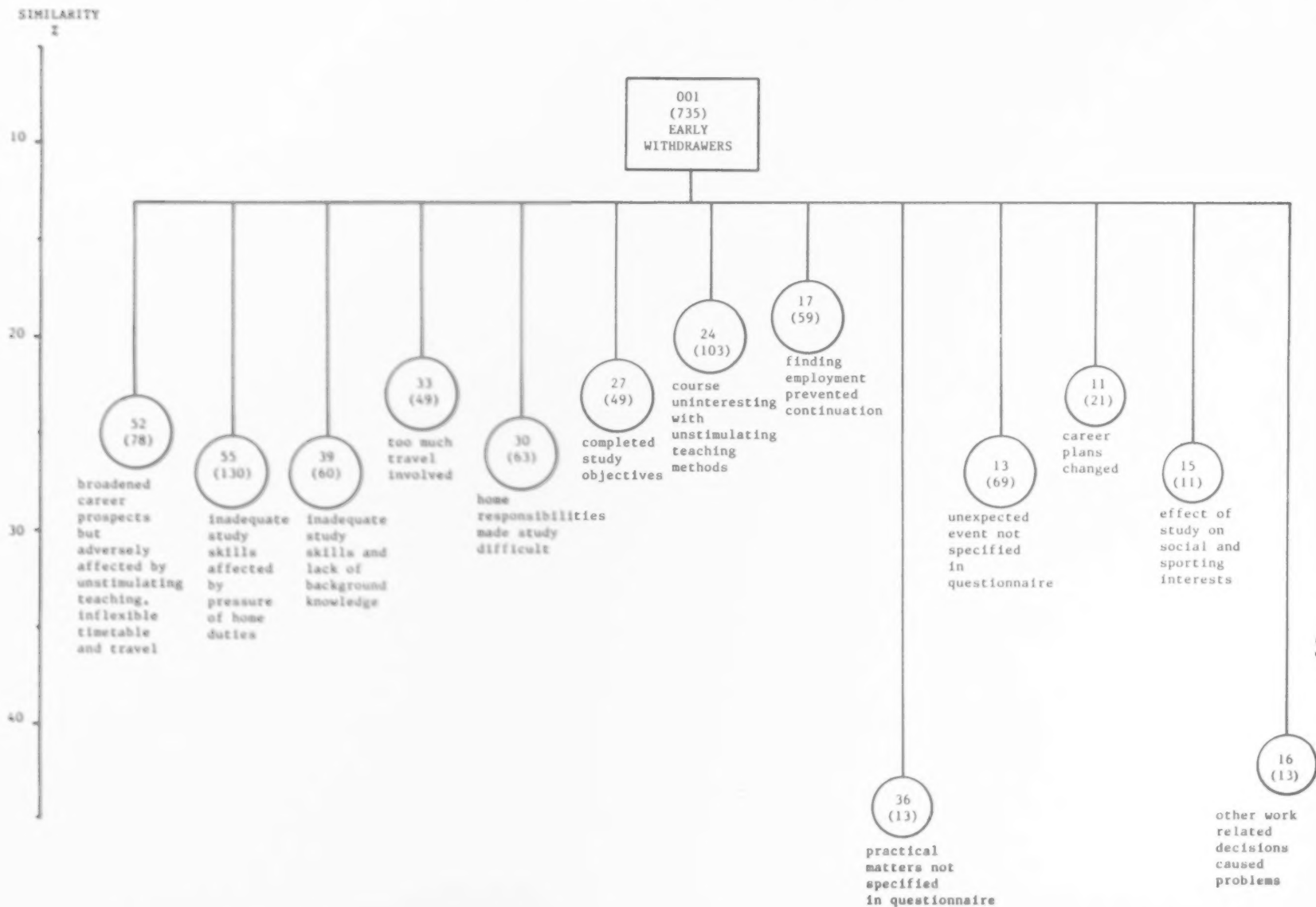


FIGURE 3: CLUSTER DIAGRAM OF LATER WITHDRAWER
SAMPLE (SURVEY TWO)

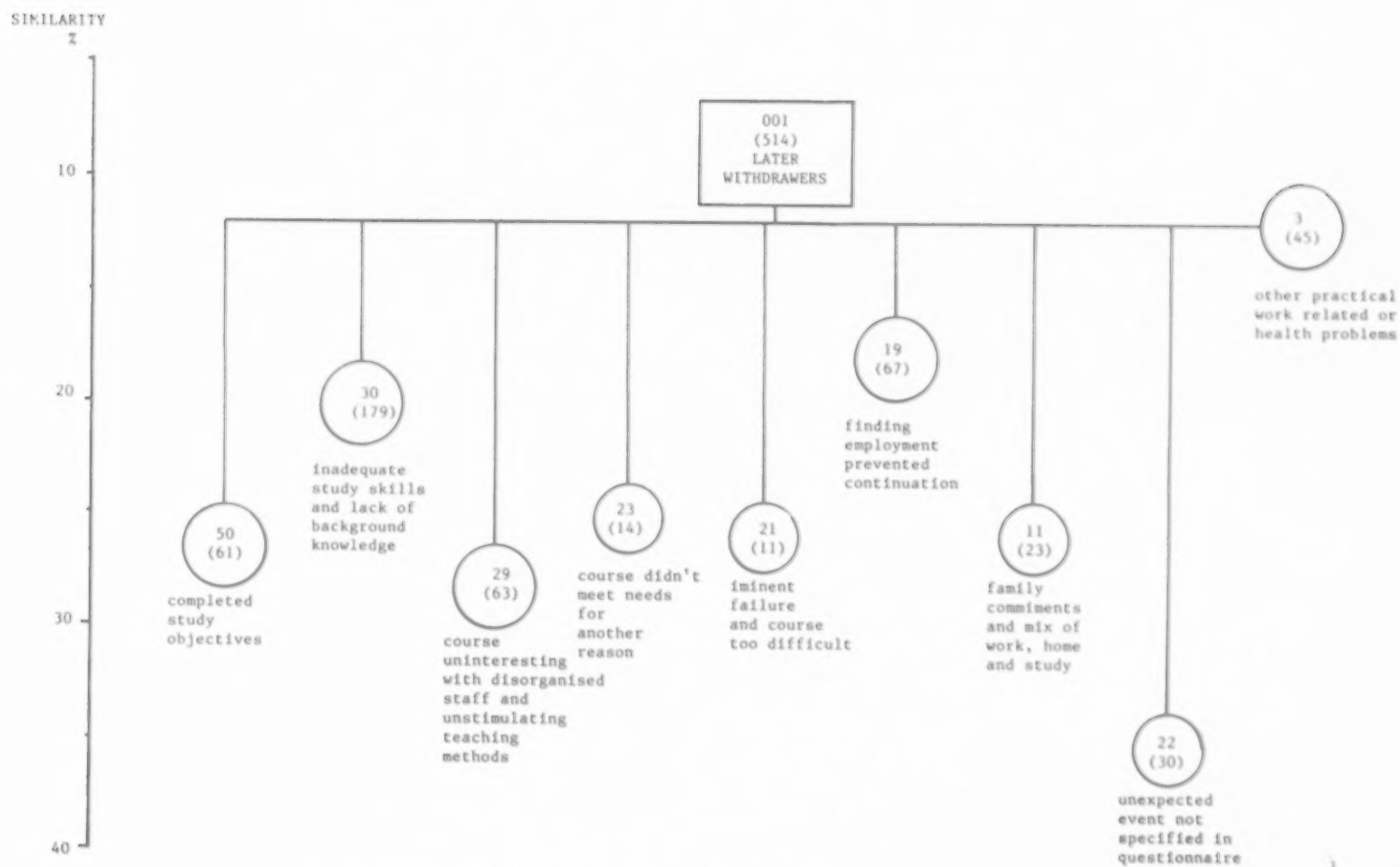
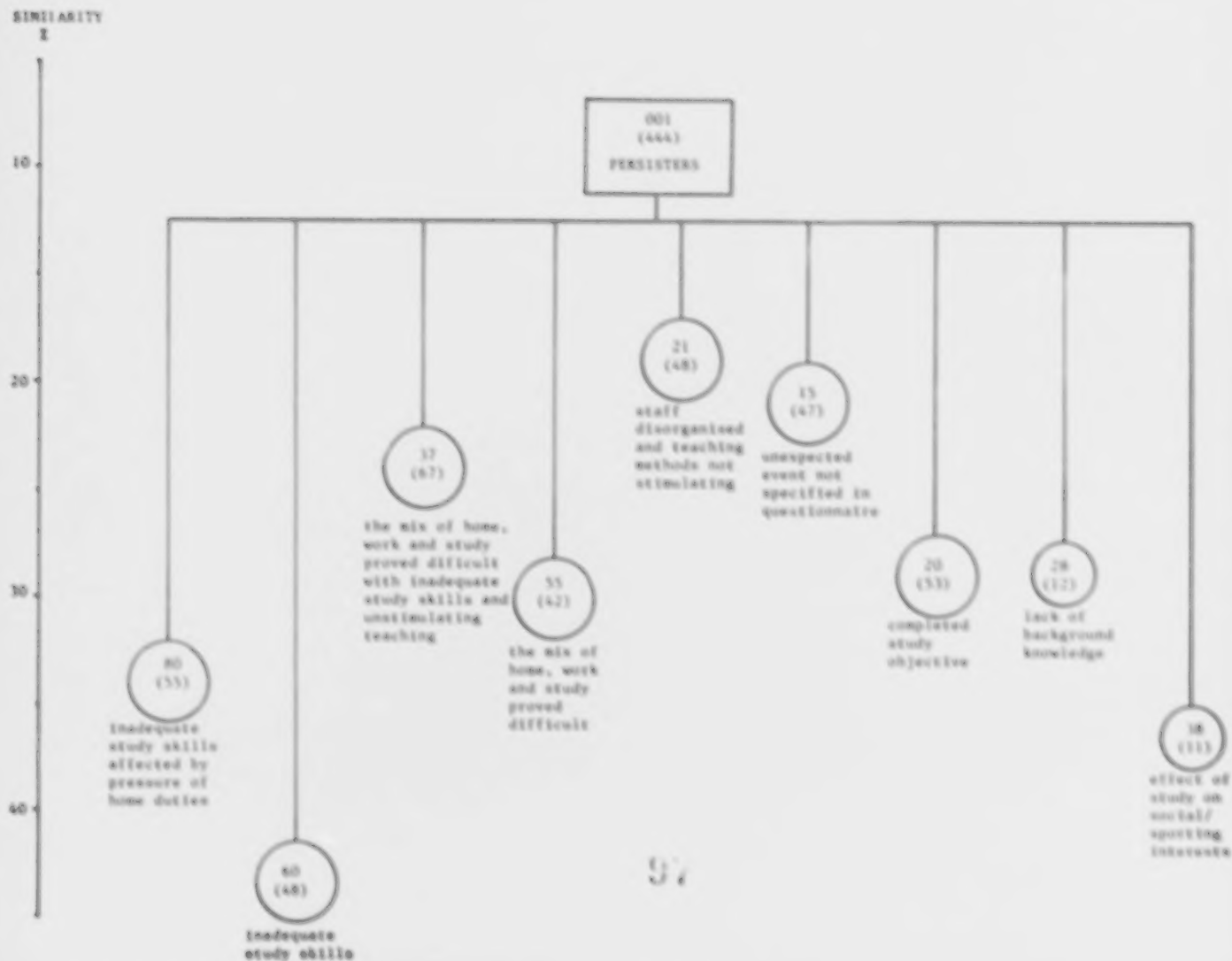


FIGURE 4: CLUSTER DIAGRAM OF PERSISTERS SAMPLE
(SURVEY THREE)



For each cluster shown, the top number is the cluster number, which is an arbitrary number assigned during the clustering process. The number in parenthesis gives the number of respondents that are members of the cluster. The brief description below each cluster summarises the major reasons for withdrawing for the members of the cluster.

Profiles were developed for each of the main clusters shown in Figures 2, 3 and 4. These are shown in Tables 50, 51, 52. In order to identify to what extent the profiles of each individual cluster differed from the profile of the total sample, all cluster values were checked for statistically significant differences from the corresponding total sample values by calculating the standard error of the cluster value from the corresponding total sample value. At the 0.05 level of significance, values of approximately two standard errors or more above or below the corresponding total sample value indicated that the particular cluster value varied systematically from the corresponding total same value rather than being the result of random variation.

In practical terms this means that the nature of the members of a particular cluster is that of the total sample except to the extent that systematic differences have been identified. That is a TAFE college counsellor for example will know the particular characteristics of a group who withdraw or persist for particular reasons. Taken conversely it might be argued that, if the TAFE college counsellors know the characteristics of the group, they have a clue as to whether they are likely to withdraw or persist and the reasons why. However, for at least two reasons, it is unwise to rely too heavily on such information.

- . Firstly, the converse of a fact is not necessarily true. Students who drop out because too much travel is involved may tend to live with their parents and be younger than other students but the reverse is not necessarily true.
- . Secondly, relying on such information is based implicitly on the assumption that reasons for withdrawal or persists can be found in some quality or combination of qualities of the student. Although, as pointed out in Section 4.8, some weight must be given to this argument, it ignores the principal reasons for attrition and retention which have been considered in this study. These are the interactions of variables represented by the personal characteristics of the students with the variables arising from the context in which they study (Section 2.2.2).

4.9.1 Early withdrawer clusters

The result of the cluster analysis of the sample of early withdrawers is given in Figure 2. The thirteen main clusters contained a total of 718 respondents. The remaining 17 respondents are termed 'outliers'. They are too different in their responses to join a main cluster. The outliers represent only 2.3% of the sample. The main clusters ranged in similarity from 19% to 44%, and the whole sample had a similarity of 8.9%.

All of the dominant factors and major reasons for withdrawing for each cluster are shown in Table 46. A dominant factor indicates that at least 50% of the members of the cluster had rated that factor as 'important' or 'very important'. Similarly a major reason indicates that at least 50% of the members of the cluster had rated that reason as 'important' or 'very important'. It could be that, although a factor is dominant, the responses to the reasons within that factor are so dispersed that no one reason within the major factor emerges as major. Profiles of the members of each cluster are shown in Table 50.

(a) Six of the 13 clusters had just one factor dominant.

(i) Achievement of study objective (Cluster 27).

It has to be questioned how students who withdraw from the first year of a course before middle May can have achieved their study objectives. Nevertheless 49 (6.5%) of 751 early withdrawers said that they had. These respondents had enrolled primarily for career related reasons and at the time of responding tended to be unemployed and registered with the CES. There seems a strange contradiction here. The respondents had achieved their study objectives of improving career prospects, but yet were still unemployed.

(ii) Course (general and teaching) (Cluster 24).

Of the 751 respondents, 103 (13.7%) were in this cluster which contained those who reported that they found the courses uninteresting and the teachers using unstimulating teaching methods. The members of this cluster reflected the characteristics of the total sample profile.

- (iii) Practical matters (related to home/personal commitments) (Clusters 30 and 36).

In the first case (Cluster 30) home responsibilities made studies for the respondents difficult. An examination of the profile showed that these respondents tended to be older than the members of the total sample and to be engaged in full-time home duties. The number of respondents enrolled in external courses was significantly higher than for the total sample. These respondents were very well informed on their obligations as students. Perhaps it was the inability to meet these obligations which caused them to withdraw.

In the second case (Cluster 36), the reasons for withdrawal had not been specified in the questionnaire. These respondents were often enrolled in horticultural/rural courses and they rated their ability to write English less highly than most respondents.

- (iv) Work related decisions (Cluster 17).
These respondents reported that finding employment prevented them from continuing their courses.
- (v) Unexpected events (Cluster 13).
These were not specified in the questionnaire, but a content analysis showed the following unexpected events had affected respondents

- . class disruption including personality clashes with other students;
- . trip abroad;
- . turnover of teachers
- . overseas visitors;
- . insufficient resources;
- . insufficient exemption.

As the principal practical purpose of cluster profiles is to identify characteristics which may give a clue to people such as counsellors as to whether students are likely to withdraw or persist for particular reasons, profiles of students who withdraw for unexpected reasons are considered unlikely to be helpful.

TABLE 46: DOMINANT FACTORS AND MAJOR REASONS FOR WITHDRAWING
FOR EARLY WITHDRAWER CLUSTERS

PART I

CLUSTER	52	55	34	33	30	27	24
DESCRIPTION	Broadened career prospects but adversely affected by unstimulating teaching, inflexible timetable and travel.	Inadequate study skills affected by pressure of home duties.	Inadequate study skills and lack of background knowledge.	Too much travel involved.	Some responsibilities made study difficult.	Completed study objectives.	Course uninteresting with unstimulating teaching methods.
NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS	78	130	80	49	81	49	103
DOMINANT FACTORS - Factors over 50% (of cluster members who rated the factor as 'important' or 'very important')	Course 72%, College/Colleges 53%, Distance/Remoteness (Isolation)/Travel 81%, Practical matters 53%, Work related decisions 83%.	Course 70%, Practical matters 78%, Academic preparedness 70%.	Course 72%, Academic preparedness 92%.	Distance/Remoteness (Isolation)/Travel 76%, Work related decisions 71%.	Practical matters 84%.	Achievement of study objective 78%.	Course 93%.
MAJOR REASONS FOR WITHDRAWING - Reasons over 50% (of cluster members who rated the reasons as 'important' or 'very important') in rank order.	Enabled to broaden career options. Unstimulating teaching methods. Travel too demanding. Inflexible timetabling. Mix of home, work and study too much. Completed part enabled skill/knowledge necessary for promotion.	Difficulties establishing study routine. Mix of home, work and study proved too much. Difficulties organizing study time. Home jobs made study impossible. Too much difficulty meeting family commitments and study. Study skills not adequate.	Difficulties in establishing study routine. Difficulties in organizing study time. Study skills not adequate. Lacked necessary background knowledge and skills. Course too difficult.	Regular travel to college after work became too demanding. Time spent in travel reduced too greatly time for study.	The mix of home, work and study proved too much. Too much difficulty meeting family commitments and study. Home jobs made study impossible.	Enabled to broaden career options. Enabled to obtain skill knowledge needed for promotion.	Course found uninteresting. Teaching methods not stimulating.

TABLE 46: DOMINANT FACTORS AND MAJOR REASONS FOR WITHDRAWING
FOR EARLY WITHDRAWER CLUSTERS

PART II

CLUSTER	17	36	13	11	15	16
DESCRIPTION	Finding employment prevented continuation.	Practical matters not specified in questionnaire.	Unexpected event not specified in questionnaire.	Career plans changed.	Effect of study on social and sporting interests.	Other work related decisions caused problems.
NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS	59	13	69	21	11	13
DOMINANT FACTORS - Factors over 50% (of cluster members who rated the factor as 'important' or 'very important')	Work related decisions 93%.	Practical matters 77%.	Unexpected events 68%.	Distance/remoteness (isolation)/Travel 57%. Work related decisions 81%.	Practical matters 55%. Finance 55%.	Work related decisions 77%.
MAJOR REASONS FOR WITHDRAWING - Reasons over 50% (of cluster members who rated the reasons as 'important' or 'very important') in rank order.	Got a job which prevented continuing part-time study.	Other practical matters caused problems.	Unexpected event caused withdrawal.	Career plans changed making study irrelevant.	Study prevented taking part in social/sporting interests.	Other work related decisions caused problems.

(b) Two of the clusters (39 and 15) were based in two factors.

(i) Practical matters (related to home/personal commitments) and finance (Cluster 15).
The members of this cluster of eleven respondents (1.5%) generally found that study prevented them from taking part in their social/sporting interests. Analysis of the profile of the members of this cluster suggested that they were younger than most respondents and that they had enrolled to please a relative or friend. They also tended to indicate that they had not been informed of their obligations to attend classes. One is led to speculate on the accuracy of this response - it may be more likely that, when enrolling, they did not realise the effect on their social/sporting interests of having to attend classes regularly.

(ii) Academic preparedness and course (general and teaching) (Cluster 39).
Although based in two factors, this cluster was affected most by inadequate study skills and lack of background knowledge. Some reasons for this could be found in the profile. The members of this cluster tend to have had a lower level of previous education than most (year 10 or 11) and to be more likely than the members of the total sample not to have English as a first language.

(c) Two of the clusters (52 and 55) were strongly based in more than two factors.

(i) Cluster 52.
The members of this cluster were affected by the interaction of five factors (Table 46). They had had the opportunity to broaden their career prospects but had been adversely affected by unstimulating teaching, inflexible time tabling and travel. It is doubtful whether there is anything particular in the profile of the members of this cluster which would help to identify them in advance. They tended to be younger and have a lesser ability to write English than most of the members of the total sample.

(ii) Cluster 55.

The members of this cluster were affected by the interaction of three factors (Table 46). They dropped out both because they had inadequate study skills or were adversely affected by the pressures of home duties. These students were more likely to be studying externally than other students.

The factors which affected early withdrawers most were practical matters (related to home/personal commitments) (dominant in five main clusters) and work related decisions (dominant in four main clusters). Three of the factors investigated, namely human relationship matters, personal matters and health, proved to be unimportant as reasons for early withdrawal as they did not dominate any of the main clusters.

4.9.2 Later withdrawer clusters

The result of the cluster analysis of the sample of later withdrawers is given in Figure 3. Nine main clusters containing a total of 493 respondents, were formed. The remaining 21 respondents were classed as outliers. The outliers represented only 4.1% of this sample. The main clusters ranged in similarity from 12% to 35%, and the whole sample of later withdrawers had a similarity of 9.0%.

It should be noted that there are fewer clusters of later withdrawers than those of early withdrawers (nine compared to thirteen). A comparison of the clusters from the three surveys is given in Section 4.9.4.

The dominant factors and major reasons for withdrawing for each of the later withdrawer clusters are given in Table 47 while profiles of the members of each cluster are given in Table 51.

(a) six of the nine clusters were based on one dominant factor,

(1) Course (general and teaching) (Clusters 29 and 21).

The respondents in cluster 29 (63 in all) withdrew because they considered the course uninteresting, the staff and course not well organised and the teaching methods unstimulating. In most respects the profile of these respondents was similar to the profile of the total sample. However they were more likely to be enrolled in business/secretarial courses than most and indicated that they were less likely to be informed on how to seek advice on completing studies successfully.

TABLE 47: DOMINANT FACTORS AND MAJOR REASONS FOR WITHDRAWING
FOR LATER WITHDRAWER CLUSTERS

CLUSTER	50	30	29	23	21	19	11	22	3
DESCRIPTION	Completed study objective.	Inadequate study skills and lack of background knowledge.	Course uninteresting with disorganised staff and unstimulating teaching methods.	Course didn't meet needs for another reason.	Imminent failure and course too difficult.	Finding employment prevented continuation.	Family commitments and mix of work, home and study.	Unexpected event not specified in questionnaire.	Other practical work related or health problems.
NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS	61	179	63	14	11	67	23	30	45
DOMINANT FACTORS - Factors over 50% (of cluster members who rated the factor as 'important' or 'very important')	Achievement of study objective 80%. Work related decisions 52%.	Course 63%. Practical matters 61%. Academic preparedness 62%.	Course 86%.	Course 57%. Practical matters 64%.	Course 55%.	Work related decisions 85%.	Practical matters 74%.	Unexpected events 67%.	Health 53%.
MAJOR REASONS FOR WITHDRAWING - Reasons over 50% (of cluster members who rated the reason as 'important' or 'very important')	Completed part provided skill/knowledge necessary for promotion. Completed part met employment needs. Completed part broadened career options. Completed part gave enough training for present job. Completed part enabled pay increase.	Mix of home, work and study too much. Difficulties in organising study time. Difficulties in establishing a study routine.	Teaching methods not stimulating. Teaching staff seemed disorganised. Course found uninteresting. Course badly organised.	Course didn't meet needs for other reasons.	Believed would fail.	Got a job which prevented continuing part time study.	Too much difficulty meeting family commitments and study.	Another unexpected event caused withdrawal.	No reason over 50%, the two principal reasons were other practical matters caused problems (29%) and an existing health problem worsened (27%).

The respondents in cluster 21 simply believed that they were going to fail. They had a lower level of education than the members of the total sample and a lower English reading ability. It is encouraging to note however that they reported a significantly higher degree of assistance and encouragement from college staff than members of the total sample.

- (ii) Practical matters (related to home/personal commitments) (Cluster 11).

The respondents in this cluster reported that they had too much difficulty meeting family commitments and study. These respondents were significantly older than the members of the total sample and tended to be engaged in full-time home duties. There was also a significantly higher percentage of females (91%) in this cluster.

- (iii) Health (Cluster 3)

Quite a large group (45) dropped out as the course progressed for health reasons. A significantly larger proportion of these respondents than the total sample were engaged in full-time home duties.

- (iv) Work related decisions (Cluster 19).

Many of these respondents found a job which prevented them from continuing part-time study. Not surprisingly the profile of the members of the cluster show that they were, at time of survey, generally in occupations unrelated to the courses from which they had withdrawn.

- (v) Unexpected events (Cluster 22).

The nature of these unexpected events is discussed in Section 4.9.1 (a) (v) above. For the same reasons identified there, the profile is not considered helpful.

- (b) Two clusters (23 and 50) were based on two dominant factors.

- (i) Cluster 23.

The course did not meet the needs of the respondents for reasons not identified in the questionnaire. The profile of the members of the cluster differed little from the profile of the main sample except that significantly less of the former claimed that they had not been informed of their obligations to attend classes.

(ii) Cluster 50.

These respondents (61 in all or 10.8%) had withdrawn principally because they had achieved their study objectives which were to obtain career training. This is a positive aspect of attrition.

(c) One main cluster (30) was based on more than two dominant factors.

In cluster 30 withdrawal was the result of the interaction of three factors (Table 47). The members of this cluster which was the largest of all (179 members or 32.0%) withdrew because of their inadequate study skills combined with the fact that they found the mix of home, work and study too much. The profile of this cluster was very similar to that of the total sample.

The factors which affected later withdrawers most were course, practical matters and work related decisions. Four factors were not dominant in any of the later withdrawer main clusters, namely college/colleges, distance/remoteness (isolation/travel), human relationship matters and finance.

4.9.3 Persister clusters

The result of the cluster analysis of the sample of persisters is given in Figure 4. Not shown in this diagram are the 163 persister respondents excluded from the cluster analysis because they rated none of the 103 problems as 'important' or 'very important'. For the 444 persisters (73.1%) that did indicate some problems, nine main clusters containing a total of 383 respondents, were formed. The remaining 61 respondents were classed as outliers, and represented 13.7% of the sample of persisters that indicated some problems. The main clusters ranged in similarity from 19 to 43%, and the whole sample cluster of persisters with some problems had a similarity of 9.4%.

The dominant factors and major problems for each of the persister clusters are given in Table 48 while profiles of the members of each cluster are given in Table 52.

(a) Seven of the nine main clusters were based on one dominant factor.

(i) Achievement of study objectives (Cluster 20).

These respondents had in fact achieved what they set out to do, but yet continued with their courses. Their profile is quite interesting. They are older than most students, have completed lower levels of education and rate their English reading ability lower than most. Further, significantly more often than others, they are working in occupations unrelated to their courses or are unemployed and registered with the CES. It might be speculated then that, although they had achieved their initial aims, they have continued to study because they either had been unable to obtain the job they wanted or a job at all.

(ii) Course (teaching and learning) (Cluster 21).

The respondents in this cluster were critical of the teaching staff when they claimed that the teachers were disorganised and used unstimulating teaching methods. Again the profile is interesting. These respondents were older and better educated than the total sample. Perhaps here lay the reason for their criticism.

(iii) Practical matters (related to home/personal commitments) (Clusters 55 and 38).

. A variety of difficulties arising out of home commitments (Cluster 55).

Generally the members of this cluster tended to be older than most respondents.

. Effect of study on social/sporting interests (Cluster 38).

Except that these respondents lived with their parents more often than the members of the total sample, their profile differed little from that of the total sample.

TABLE 48: DOMINANT FACTORS AND MAJOR PROBLEMS
FOR PERSISTER CLUSTERS

CLUSTER	80	60	37	55	21	15	20	28	38
DESCRIPTION	Inadequate study skills affected by pressure of home duties.	Inadequate study skills.	The mix of home, work and study proved difficult with inadequate study skills and unstimulating teaching.	The mix of home, work and study proved too difficult.	Staff disorganised and teaching methods not stimulating.	Unexpected event not specified in questionnaire.	Completed study objective.	Lack of background knowledge.	Effect of study on social/sporting interests.
NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS	55	48	67	42	48	47	53	12	11
DOMINANT FACTORS - Factors over 50% (of cluster members who rated the factor as 'important' or 'very important')	Course 67%. Practical matters 76%. Academic preparedness 95%.	Academic preparedness 74%.	Achievement of study objective 61%. Course 76%. Human relationship matters 57%. Practical matters 78%. Academic preparedness 57%.	Practical matters 98%.	Course 73%.	Unexpected events 57%.	Achievement of study objective 89%.	Academic preparedness.	Practical matters 73%.
MAJOR REASONS FOR WITHDRAWING - Reasons over 50% (of cluster members who rated the reasons as 'important' or 'very important')	Difficulties establishing a study routine. Difficulties organising a study time. Study skills not adequate. Mix of home, work and study too much. Home jobs made study impossible. Too much difficulty meeting family commitments and study.	Difficulties organising study time. Difficulties establishing a study routine. Study skills not adequate.	Mix of home, work and study too much. Home jobs made study impossible. Difficulties establishing a study routine. Teaching methods not stimulating. Difficulties organising study time.	Mix of home, work and study too much. Too much difficulty meeting family commitments and study. Home jobs made study impossible.	Teaching staff seemed disorganised. Teaching methods not stimulating.	Another unexpected event caused withdrawal.	Completed part enabled broadened career options. Completed part provided skill/knowledge necessary for promotion.	Lack of the necessary background knowledge and skills.	Study prevented taking part in social/sporting interests.

(iv) Academic preparedness

. Inadequate study skills (Cluster 60).

Fundamentally these respondents met difficulties because their study skills were not adequate to organise their study time or establish a study routine. By and large they had a lower level of education than most and rated their ability to speak, write and read English significantly lower than members of the total sample.

. Lack of background knowledge (Cluster 28).

These respondents were significantly older than the members of the total sample.

(v) Unexpected events (Cluster 15).

It has been argued above that a profile in this case is not very helpful.

(b) Two clusters were based on more than two dominant factors (Clusters 80 and 37).

(i) Cluster 80.

The respondents in this cluster found difficulties because of the interaction of three factors (Table 48). Inadequate study skills together with the pressure of home duties raised difficulties which had to be overcome. Many of these students were older and enrolled in science/technology in business/secretarial courses by external studies.

(ii) Cluster 37.

The respondents of this cluster found difficulties because of the interaction of five factors (Table 48). The mix of home, work and study proved difficult and this was compounded by inadequate study skills combined with what they saw as unstimulating teaching.

These respondents were significantly older than the members of the total sample,, rated their English writing ability as below average and, perhaps even more importantly, were enrolled in more subjects than most. Generally they advised the college if they were considering withdrawing, but were less likely to have this advice followed up later by the college staff than the members of other clusters.

The factors which affected persisters most were academic preparedness, practical matters, course and achievement of study objectives. Six factors were not dominant in any of the persister main clusters, namely college/colleges, distance/remoteness (isolation)/travel, personal matters, health, work related decisions and finance.

4.9.4 Comparison of clusters from the three surveys

Although the cluster analyses have been conducted on respondents enrolled in selected part-time TAFE certificate courses, as pointed out in Section 1.2 (a), this choice of courses allows the results of the analyses to be generalisable to the population of first-year part-time TAFE certificate students. Table 49 lists all of the main clusters found in the three surveys, and indicates the clusters which were judged to be similar across the three surveys. Clusters were judged to be similar if the major reasons for withdrawing (or 'problems') were the same or nearly the same. As a result of these comparisons, fifteen main cluster types were distinguished. It was found that of these fifteen main cluster types:

- . five were present in all samples. All of these (except unexpected events) were reported in Table 45 as principal variables causing withdrawal or problems with persistence among all respondents.
- . all fifteen applied to either early or later withdrawers. That is first-year part-time TAFE certificate students who withdraw may generally be divided into 15 groups.
- . thirteen were present in the early withdrawer sample;
- . nine were present in the later withdrawer sample;
- . seven were present in the persister sample, with two of the main cluster types splitting into two clusters each.

Six of the main cluster types which occurred in the early withdrawer sample, did not occur in the later withdrawer sample. That is, respondents affected by some problems tended to withdraw early rather than later. Among these were respondents who said that they had broadened their career prospects but who had been adversely affected by a combination of reasons, whose inadequate study skills were affected by pressure of home duties (although a reasonable number of people (55) were in the cluster of persisters that reported these problems), or who found that too much travel was involved.

Two main cluster types appeared to be specific to later withdrawers, namely 'course didn't meet needs for another reason (not specified in questionnaire)' and 'imminent failure and course too difficult'. In the second case, it was clear that such a cluster would be found among the later withdrawers because many courses have important end-of-year examinations.

It should be noted that, although cluster 3 from the later withdrawer survey overlaps with cluster 36 of the early withdrawer survey, it also contained members giving a wider range of withdrawing reasons. Cluster 3 (later withdrawers) divided into three sub-clusters, one of which was similar to cluster 36 (early withdrawers) i.e. practical matters not specified in the questionnaire. The other two sub-clusters were:

- . "other health problems and birth of child";
- . "health worsened".

These latter health related sub-clusters from the later withdrawer sample were not matched by similar clusters from the early withdrawer sample. Perhaps this is because such health problems had more time to develop in the case of later withdrawers, and people having such problems early in the year would be less likely to enrol in a course.

Table 49 suggests that "inadequate study skills" was reported as a reason for withdrawing or a problem by large numbers of early withdrawers, later withdrawers, and persisters. This confirms Table 45, which shows the reasons for withdrawing (or 'problems') rated most frequently as 'important' or 'very important' for all respondents. Inadequate study skills and closely related reasons figured strongly in the top reasons.

TABLE 49

**THE MAIN CLUSTER TYPES AND THEIR
DISTRIBUTION AMONG THE THREE SURVEYS**

TYPE NO.	DESCRIPTION OF MAIN CLUSTER TYPE	EARLY WITHDRAWERS		LATER WITHDRAWERS		PERSISTERS	
		CLUSTER NUMBER	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS	CLUSTER NUMBER	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS	CLUSTER NUMBER	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS
1.	Broadened career prospects but adversely affected by unstimulating teaching, inflexible timetabling and travel.	52	(78)				
2.	Inadequate study skills affected by pressure of home duties.	55	(130)			80	(55)
3.	Inadequate study skills and lack of background knowledge.	39	(60)	30	(179)	28 60	(12) (48)
4.	Too much travel involved.	33	(49)				
5.	Home responsibilities made study difficult.	30	(63)	11	(23)	37 55	(67) (42)
6.	Completed study objectives.	27	(49)	50	(61)	20	(53)
7.	Course was uninteresting with unstimulating teaching methods.	24	(103)	29	(63)	21	(48)
8.	Finding employment prevented continuation.	17	(59)	19	(67)		
9.	Practical matters not specified in questionnaire.	36	(13)	3	(45)		
10.	Unexpected event not specified in questionnaire.	13	(69)	22	(30)	15	(47)
11.	Career plans changed.	11	(21)				
12.	Effect of study on social and sporting interests.	15	(11)			38	(11)
13.	Work related decisions not specified in questionnaire.	16	(13)				
14.	Course didn't meet needs for another reason.			23	(14)		
15.	Imminent failure and course too difficult.			21	(11)		

A main cluster is defined as one with ten or more members and not subsumed by a bigger cluster. Blank spaces indicate that no cluster of this type was formed in the particular survey, or, if formed, contained less than 10 respondents.

NOTES: Cluster number 3 (45 respondents) in the sample of later withdrawers further divided into:

- . practical matters not specified in questionnaire (similar to cluster 36 in early withdrawers sample);
- . other health problems and birth of child;
- . health worsened.

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TABLE 50 (PART 1): PROFILES OF THE CLUSTERS OF EARLY WITHDRAWERS

CLUSTER (number of members)	TOTAL SAMPLE n=751	52 (78)	55 (130)	39 (60)	33 (49)
NATURE OF CLUSTER		Broadened career prospects but adversely affected by unstimulating teaching, inflexible timetable and travel.	Inadequate study skills affected by pressure of home duties.	Inadequate study skills and lack of background knowledge.	Too much travel involved.
FEMALE PERCENTAGE	43	38	43	36	42
HOME STATUS (responses over 20%)		Parents 46%.	Partner and family 33%. Parents 27%.	Partner and family 24%. Parents 43%.	Partner and family 25%. Parents 50%.
Partner and family %	24.8				
Partner %	7.6				
Parents %	28.8				
Alone %	6.7				
Friend(s) %	9.9				
Other %	7.2				
AVERAGE AGE (years)	27.0	24.3**	27.7	26.3	24.6**
HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION COMPLETED (responses over 20%)		Year 10 or 11 35%. *Matriculation or Year 12 44%.	Year 10 or 11 47%. Matriculation or Year 12 22%.	*Year 10 or 11 59%. Matriculation or Year 12 22%.	Year 10 or 11 39%. Matriculation or Year 12 41%.
Year 9 or less %	9.7				
Year 10 or 11 %	40.5				
Matriculation or Year 12 %	28.8				
Post Secondary Cert. %	9.3				
Degree or Diploma %	9.9				
NON-AUSTRALIAN BORN	21	22	22	23	24
MIGRANT STATUS %	18	18	18	17	22
ENGLISH NOT FIRST LANGUAGE %	7	15*	7	17*	8
SPEAK LANGUAGE OTHER THAN ENGLISH REGULARLY %	13	18	12	18	18
ENGLISH SPEAKING ABILITY (higher figure - less ability)	Mean 1.14	1.24	1.20	1.14	1.10
ENGLISH WRITING ABILITY (higher figure - less ability)	Mean 1.18	1.31**	1.27	1.19	1.12

CLUSTER (number of members)	TOTAL SAMPLE n=751	52 (78)	55 (130)	39 (60)	33 (49)
ENGLISH READING ABILITY (higher figure - less ability)	Mean 1.17	1.27	1.22	1.16	1.16
OCCUPATION		QUESTIONNAIRE INADEQUATELY PROCESSED FOR ANALYSIS			
UNEMPLOYED AND REGISTERED WITH CES %	7.2	5.1	7.7	6.7	4.1
UNEMPLOYED AND NOT REGISTERED WITH CES %	2.3	2.5	0.8	0	0
FULL TIME HOME DUTIES %	10.0	2.6	8.5	8.3	0
ENGAGED IN VOLUNTARY COMMUNITY SERVICE - FULL-TIME %	0.3	0	0	1.7	0
ENGAGED IN VOLUNTARY COMMUNITY SERVICE - PART-TIME %	3.9	1.3	3.1	3.3	0
COURSES IN WHICH STUDENTS ENROLLED (responses over 20%)		Science/Technology 22%. Business/Secretarial 61%.	Science/Technology 28%. Business/Secretarial 51%.	Science/Technology 29%. Business/Secretarial 57%	Science/Technology 21%. Business/Secretarial 50%.
Science/Technology %	20.9				
Horticulture/Rural %	5.7				
Fashion (excluding hairdressing)	6.7				
Business/ Secretarial %	48.9				
Other %	7.3				
NUMBER OF COURSE SUBJECTS ENROLLED	Mean 2.59	2.81	2.74	2.38	2.73
NUMBER OF COLLEGES ATTENDED	Mean 1.08	1.10	1.12	1.05	1.07
COLLEGE ATTENDANCE MODE %	59.5	74.4	42.3**	55.0	71.4
EXTERNAL STUDIES MODE	22.8	7.7**	40.0*	30.0	8.2**
PART COLLEGE ATTENDANCE AND PART EXTERNAL STUDIES MODE %	10.9	14.1	15.4	11.7	14.3

CLUSTER (number of members)	TOTAL SAMPLE n=751	52 (78)	55 (130)	39 (60)	33 (49)
REASONS FOR ENROLLING (responses over 50%)		*Help in job 88%. Obtain training for specific job 73%.	Help in job 78%. Obtain training for specific job 65%.	Help in job 69%. Obtain training for specific job 65%.	Help in job 69%. Obtain training for specific job 65%.
To please a relative or friend %	9.8	Widen career options 90%.	Widen career options 92%.	Widen career options 88%.	Widen career options 71%.
To help in job %	63.6	Satisfy interest 69%.	Satisfy interest 66%.	Satisfy interest 53%.	Satisfy interest 71%.
To obtain training for a specific job %	59.5	Obtain personal satisfaction 78%.	Obtain personal satisfaction 78%.	Obtain personal satisfaction 68%.	Obtain personal satisfaction 84%.
To widen career options %	80.3				
To assist entry to another course(s) %	20.6				
To gain a tertiary qualification %	36.5				
To satisfy an interest %	61.9				
To fill in time %	8.0				
To obtain personal satisfaction %	71.7				
Other %	9.2				
SOURCE OF INFORMATION ABOUT COURSE (responses over 30%)		Major daily newspapers 36%.* Regional/municipal paper 32%.*	TAFE information services or publicity 52%. Former or current TAFE students 34%. Someone at work 36%.	TAFE information services or publicity 50%. Former or current TAFE students 33%.	TAFE information services or publicity 55%. TAFE teaching staff 35%. Former or current TAFE students 35%. Own TAFE experience 33%. Friend(s) 35%.
Major daily newspapers %	21.3	TAFE information services or publicity 61%.			
Sunday papers %	6.8	TAFE career/vocational counselling 41%.			
Regional or municipal papers %	17.9	TAFE teaching staff 36%.			
Television %	8.7	Former or current TAFE students 46%.			
TAFE information services or publicity %	47.0	Own TAFE experience 38%.			
TAFE career/vocational counselling %	18.4	Someone at work 49%.*			
TAFE teaching staff %	23.9	Friend(s) 40%.			
Former or current TAFE students	33.7				
Own experiences in TAFE	27.3				
School careers advisers or staff	14.2				
Government career services	10.5				
Other commonwealth or state government depts. %	10.3				
Parents/relatives %	16.5				
Local learning centre %	6.9				
Someone at work %	28.2				
Friend(s) %	28.9				

CLUSTER (number of members)	TOTAL SAMPLE n=751	52 (78)	55 (130)	59 (60)	53 (49)
BETWEEN ENROLMENT AND STARTING COURSES (responses over 30%)		1-4 weeks 58%.	1-4 weeks 51%.	1-6 days 32%. 1-4 weeks 40%.	1-6 days 31%. 1-4 weeks 55%.
1-6 days %	24.9				
1-4 weeks %	51.9				
1-4 months %	17.0				
4-8 months %	1.3				
8-12 months %	0.3				
Longer %	0.7				
INFORMED OF COSTS. YES %	74.7	65.4	73.1	76.7	79.6
INFORMED OF OBLIGATIONS TO ATTEND CLASS. YES %	67.2	66.7	70.8	66.7	75.5
INFORMED OF OBLIGATIONS TO COMPLETE COURSE ASSIGNMENTS. YES %	76.4	74.4	85.4	73.3	81.6
INFORMED OF OBLIGATIONS TO REGULAR STUDY. YES %	74.6	76.9*	87.7	78.3	81.6
INFORMED OF RESOURCES/ SERVICES TO HELP COMPLETE STUDIES. YES %	67.4	62.8	76.2	70.0	71.4
INFORMED OF RESOURCES/ SERVICES AVAILABLE TO SEEK ADVICE. YES %	57.5	52.6	73.1*	56.7	61.2
INFORMED OF RESOURCES/ SERVICES TO FEEL AT EASE IN THE COLLEGE. YES %	57.4	50.0	63.1	56.7	67.4
ADVISED COLLEGE OF INTENTION TO WITHDRAW. YES %	41.0	41.0	43.1	31.7	42.8
COLLEGE STAFF HELPED IN DECISION TO WITHDRAW. YES %	8.0	16.7*	4.6	6.7	2.0
COLLEGE STAFF CONTACTED STUDENT ABOUT DECISION TO WITHDRAW. YES %	11.2	10.3	12.3	16.7	10.2

CLUSTER (number of respondents)	TOTAL SAMPLE n=751	52 (78)	55 (130)	39 (60)	33 (49)
COLLEGE STAFF HELPED RESPONDENTS WITH ANY PROBLEMS. YES %	8.7	7.7	13.8	11.7	6.1
COLLEGE STAFF ENCOURAGED RESPONDENTS TO CONTINUE WITH STUDIES. YES %	11.9	15.4	11.5	6.7	10.2

* Indicates that the value of the cluster is significantly higher than the sample value (at the 0.05 level of significance).

** Indicates that the value of the cluster is significantly lower than the sample value (at the 0.05 level of significance).

TABLE 50 (PART 2): PROFILES OF THE CLUSTERS OF EARLY WITHDRAWERS

CLUSTER (number of members)	TOTAL SAMPLE n=751	30 (63)	27 (49)	24 (103)	17 (59)	36 (133)
NATURE OF CLUSTER		Home responsibilities made study difficult.	Completed study objectives.	Course uninteresting with unstimulating teaching methods.	Finding employment prevented continuation.	Practical matters not specified in questionnaire.
FEMALE PERCENTAGE	43	51	52	44	50	33
HOME STATUS (responses over 20%)		Partner and family 62%.*	Parents 37%	Partner and family 31%, Parents 35%.	Partner and family 30%, Parents 41%.	*Partner and family 57%.
Partner and family %	24.8					
Partner %	7.6					
Parents %	28.8					
Alone %	6.7					
Friend(s) %	9.9					
Other %	7.2					
AVERAGE AGE (years)	27.0	29.7*	25.5	27.7	27.1	30
HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION (completed responses over 20%)		Year 10 or 11 41%, *Matriculation or Year 12 25%.	Year 10 or 11 43%, Matriculation or Year 12 24%.	Year 10 or 11 39%, Matriculation or Year 12 36%.	Year 10 or 11 46%, Matriculation or Year 12 23%.	Matriculation or Year 12 25%, Post Sec. Cert. 25%, Degree or Diploma 25%.
Year 9 or less %	9.7					
Year 10 or 11 %	40.5					
Matriculation or Year 12 %	28.8					
Post Secondary Cert. %	9.3					
Degree or Diploma %	9.9					
NON-AUSTRALIAN BORN %	21	17	24	24	15	15
MIGRANT STATUS %	18	13	18	20	15	15
ENGLISH NOT FIRST LANGUAGE %	7	3	6	5	9	0
SPEAK LANGUAGE OTHER THAN ENGLISH REGULARLY %	13	8	16	14	10	0
ENGLISH SPEAKING ABILITY (higher figure - less ability)	Mean 1.14	1.10	1.20	1.12	1.02*	1.33
ENGLISH WRITING ABILITY (higher figure - less ability)	Mean 1.18	1.08	1.16	1.15	1.13	1.44**
ENGLISH READING ABILITY (higher figure - less ability)	Mean 1.17	1.06	1.18	1.13	1.07	1.22

CLUSTER (number of members)	TOTAL SAMPLE n=751	30 (63)	27 (49)	24 (103)	17 (59)	36 (13)
OCCUPATION		QUESTIONNAIRE INADEQUATELY PROCESSED FOR ANALYSIS				
UNEMPLOYED AND REGISTERED WITH CES %	7.2	1.6	14.3*	10.7	0	7.7
UNEMPLOYED AND NOT REGISTERED WITH CES %	2.3	3.2	4.1	3.9	1.7	0
FULL TIME HOME DUTIES %	10.0	19.0*	14.3	13.6	3.4	0
ENGAGED IN VOLUNTARY COMMUNITY SERVICE - FULL-TIME %	0.3	0	0	1.0	0	0
ENGAGED IN VOLUNTARY COMMUNITY SERVICE - PART-TIME %	3.9	3.2	12.2*	3.9	1.7	0
COURSE IN WHICH STUDENTS ENROLLED (responses over 20%)		Science/Technology 27. Business/Secretarial 42%.	Science/Technology 20%. Business/Secretarial 58%.	Business/Secretarial 55%.	Business/Secretarial 56%.	Horticultural/Rural 38%.* Business/Secretarial 50%.
Science/Technology %	20.9					
Horticulture/Rural %	5.7					
Fashion (excluding hairdressing %	6.7					
Business and Secretarial %	48.9					
Other %	7.3					
NUMBER OF COURSE SUBJECTS ENROLLED	Mean 2.59	2.25	2.67	2.40	2.94	2.78
NUMBER OF COLLEGES ATTENDED	Mean 1.08	1.10	1.12	1.03	1.00	1.00
COLLEGE ATTENDANCE MODE %	59.5	52.4	67.3	67.0	71.2	53.8
EXTERNAL STUDIES MODE	22.8	38.1*	20.4	13.6	6.8**	7.7
PART COLLEGE ATTENDANCE AND PART EXTERNAL STUDIES MODE %	10.9	6.3	10.2	16.5	6.8	7.7

CLUSTER (number of members)	TOTAL SAMPLE n=751	30 (43)	27 (49)	24 (103)	17 (59)	36 (13)
REASONS FOR ENROLLING (responses over 50%)		Help in job 51%. Widen career options 73%.	Help in job 82%.* Obtain training for specific job 76%.* Widen career options 96%.*	Help in job 62%. Obtain training for specific job 54%. Widen career options 68%.	Help in job 51%. Obtain training for specific job 63%. Widen career options 75%.	Widen career options 54%.
To please a relative or friend %	9.8	Satisfy interest 70%.	Satisfy interest 59%.	Satisfy interest 58%.	Satisfy interest 59%.	
To help in job %	63.6	Obtain personal satisfaction 81%.	Obtain personal satisfaction 78%.	Obtain personal satisfaction 66%.	Obtain personal satisfaction 68%.	
To obtain training for specific job %	59.5					
To widen career options %	80.3					
To assist entry to another course(s) %	20.6					
To gain a tertiary qualification %	36.5					
To satisfy an interest %	61.9					
To fill in time %	8.0					
To obtain personal satisfaction %	71.7					
Other %	9.2					
SOURCE OF INFORMATION ABOUT COURSE (responses over 30%)		TAFE information services or publicity 41%.	TAFE information services or publicity 50%.	TAFE information services or publicity 50%.	Regional/Municipal papers 39%.* TAFE information services or publicity 41%.	TAFE information services or publicity 38%.
Major daily newspapers %	21.4	Former or current TAFE students 40%.	TAFE career/vocational counselling 31%.* TAFE teaching staff 37%.	Friends(s) 30%.		
Sunday papers %	6.8		Former or current TAFE students 51%.* Own TAFE experience 47%.*			
Regional or municipal papers %	17.9		Someone at work 39%.			
Television %	8.7		Friend(s) 33%.			
TAFE information services or publicity %	47.0					
TAFE career/vocational counselling %	18.4					
Former or current TAFE students %	33.7					
Own experiences in TAFE %	27.3					
School careers advisers or staff %	14.2					
TAFE teaching staff %	23.9					
Government career services %	10.5					
Other Commonwealth or state government depts. %	10.3					
Parents/relatives %	16.5					
Local learning centre %	6.8					
Someone at work %	28.2					
Friend(s) %	28.9					

CLUSTER (number of members)	TOTAL SAMPLE n=751	30 (63)	27 (49)	24 (103)	17 (59)	36 (13)
TIME BETWEEN ENROLMENT AND STARTING COURSE (responses over 30%)		1-4 weeks 67%.	1-6 days 35%. 1-4 weeks 49%.	1-6 days 30%. 1-4 weeks 58%.	1-4 weeks 56%.	1-6 days 31%. 1-4 weeks 38%.
1-6 days %	24.9					
1-4 weeks %	51.9					
1-4 months %	17.0					
4-8 months %	1.3					
8-12 months %	0.3					
Longer %	0.7					
INFORMED OF COSTS. YES %	74.7	88.9*	83.7	69.9	78.0	69.2
INFORMED OF OBLIGATIONS TO ATTEND CLASSES. YES %	67.2	81.0*	75.5	57.3	64.4	61.5
INFORMED OF OBLIGATIONS TO COMPLETE COURSE ASSIGNMENTS. YES %	76.4	88.9*	79.6	68.9	76.3	69.2
INFORMED OF OBLIGATIONS TO REGULAR STUDY. YES %	74.6	84.1	79.6	62.1	64.5	69.5
INFORMED OF RESOURCES/ SERVICES TO HELP COMPLETE STUDIES. YES %	67.4	74.6	69.4	59.2	66.1	53.8
INFORMED OF RESOURCES/ SERVICES AVAILABLE TO SEEK ADVICE. YES %	57.5	68.3	44.9	47.6	57.6	53.8
INFORMED OF RESOURCES/ SERVICES TO FEEL AT EASE IN THE COLLEGE. YES %	57.4	65.1	57.1	48.5	66.1	38.5
ADVISED COLLEGE OF INTENTION TO WITHDRAW. YES %	41.0	47.7	44.9	33.0	39.0	38.5
COLLEGE STAFF HELPED IN DECISION TO WITHDRAW. YES %	8.0	4.8	14.3	6.8	0	15.4

CLUSTER (number of members)	TOTAL SAMPLE n=751	30 (63)	27 (49)	24 (103)	17 (59)	36 (13)
COLLEGE STAFF CONTACTED STUDENT ABOUT DECISION TO WITHDRAW. YES %	11.2	15.9	14.3	8.7	13.6	7.7
COLLEGE STAFF HELPED RESPONDENTS WITH ANY PROBLEMS. YES %	8.7	9.5	8.2	5.8	8.5	7.7
COLLEGE STAFF ENCOURAGED RESPONDENTS TO CONTINUE WITH STUDIES. YES %	11.9	15.9	20.4	11.7	10.2	15.4

* Indicates that the value of the cluster is significantly higher than the sample value (at the 0.05 level of significance).

** Indicates that the value of the cluster is significantly lower than the sample value (at the 0.05 level of significance).

TABLE 50 (PART 3): PROFILES OF THE CLUSTERS OF EARLY WITHDRAWERS

CLUSTER (number of members)	TOTAL SAMPLE n=751	13 (69)	11 (21)	15 (11)	16 (13)
NATURE OF CLUSTER		Unexpected event not specified in questionnaire.	Career plans changed.	Effect of study on social and sporting interests.	Other work related decisions caused problems.
FEMALE PERCENTAGE	43	54	40	55	50
HOME STATUS (responses over 20%)		Partner and family 36%.	Parents 41%.	Parents 56% Friend(s) 33%.	Parents 33%.
Partner and family %	24.8				
Partner %	7.6				
Parents %	28.8				
Alone %	6.7				
Friend(s) %	9.9				
Other %	7.2				
AVERAGE AGE (years)	27.0	30.2*	25.2	22.8**	26.8
HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION COMPLETED (responses over 20%)		Year 10 or 11 38%. Matriculation or Year 12 25%.	Year 10 or 11 25%. Matriculation or Year 12 40%. Post Secondary Certificate 25%.	Year 10 or 11 27%. Matriculation or Year 12 55%.	Year 10 or 11 42%. Matriculation or Year 12 33%.
Year 9 or less %	9.7				
Year 10 or 11 %	40.5				
Matriculation or Year 12 %	28.8				
Post Secondary Cert. %	9.3				
Degree or Diploma %	9.9				
NON-AUSTRALIAN BORN %	21	28	14	18	15
MIGRANT STATUS %	18	25	24	27	0
ENGLISH NOT FIRST LANGUAGE %	7	7	5	9	0
SPEAK LANGUAGE OTHER THAN ENGLISH REGULARLY %	13	16	10	18	0
ENGLISH SPEAKING ABILITY (higher figure - less ability)	Mean 1.14	1.11	1.05	1.36	1.08
ENGLISH WRITING ABILITY (higher figure - less ability)	Mean 1.18	1.11	1.10	1.45**	1.18
ENGLISH READING ABILITY (higher figure - less ability)	Mean 1.17	1.14	1.05	1.45**	1.09

CLUSTER (number of members)	TOTAL SAMPLE n=751	13 (69)	11 (21)	15 (11)	16 (13)
OCCUPATION		QUESTIONNAIRE INADEQUATELY PROCESSED FOR ANALYSIS			
UNEMPLOYED AND REGISTERED WITH CES %	7.2	4.3	9.5	18.2	0
UNEMPLOYED AND NOT REGISTERED WITH CES %	2.3	5.8	0	0	0
FULL TIME HOME DUTIES %	10.0	20.3*	0	0	15.4
ENGAGED IN VOLUNTARY COMMUNITY SERVICE - FULL-TIME %	0.3	0	0	0	0
ENGAGED IN VOLUNTARY COMMUNITY SERVICE - PART-TIME %	3.9	4.3	9.5	0	15.4
COURSE TITLE (responses over 20%)		Science/Technology 24%, Fashion (excluding hairdressing) 23%.* Business/Secretarial 40%.	Science/Technology 37%, Business/Secretarial 58%.	Horticultural/Rural 20%, Business/Secretarial 70%.	Business/Secretarial 64%.
Science/Technology %	20.9				
Horticultural/Rural %	5.7				
Fashion (excluding hairdressing) %	6.7				
Business and Secretarial %	48.9				
Other %	7.3				
NUMBER OF COURSE SUBJECTS ENROLLED	Mean 2.59	2.27	3.25*	2.57	1.91
NUMBER OF COLLEGES ATTENDED	Mean 1.08	1.24*	1.00	1.00	1.11
COLLEGE ATTENDANCE MODE %	59.5	63.8	33.3	27.3**	69.2
EXTERNAL STUDIES MODE %	22.8	20.3	52.4*	27.3	15.4
PART COLLEGE ATTENDANCE AND PART EXTERNAL STUDIES MODE %	10.9	2.9**	4.8	18.2	0

CLUSTER (number of members)	TOTAL SAMPLE n=751	13 (69)	11 (21)	15 (11)	16 (13)
TIME BETWEEN ENROLMENT AND STARTING COURSE (responses over 30%)		1-6 days 30%. 1-4 weeks 42%.	1-4 weeks 48%. 1-4 months 38%.	1-4 weeks 64%.	1-4 weeks 46%.
1-6 days %	24.9				
1-4 weeks %	51.9				
1-4 months %	17.0				
4-8 months %	1.3				
8-12 months %	0.3				
Longer %	0.7				
INFORMED OF COSTS. YES %	74.7	72.5	57.1	90.9	69.2
INFORMED OF OBLIGATIONS TO ATTEND CLASSES. YES %	67.2	58.0	52.4	54.6**	76.9
INFORMED OF OBLIGATIONS TO COMPLETE COURSE ASSIGNMENTS. YES %	76.4	66.7	52.4	100	69.2
INFORMED OF OBLIGATIONS TO REGULAR STUDY. YES %	74.6	59.4**	61.9	81.8	76.9
INFORMED OF RESOURCES/ SERVICES TO HELP COMPLETE STUDIES. YES %	67.4	56.5	61.9	100	84.6
INFORMED OF RESOURCES/ SERVICES TO SEEK ADVICE. YES %	57.5	50.7	57.1	63.6	53.8
INFORMED OF RESOURCES/ SERVICES TO FEEL AT EASE IN THE COLLEGE. YES %	57.4	49.3	61.9	90.9*	61.5
ADVISED COLLEGE OF INTENTION TO WITHDRAW. YES %	41.0	46.4	66.7*	54.6	38.5
COLLEGE STAFF HELPED IN DECISION TO WITHDRAW. YES %	8.0	10.1	14.3	9.1	15.4
COLLEGE STAFF CONTACTED STUDENT ABOUT DECISION TO WITHDRAW. YES %	11.2	7.2	4.8	0	15.4

CLUSTER (number of members)	TOTAL SAMPLE n=751	13 (69)	11 (21)	15 (11)	16 (13)
REASONS FOR ENROLLING (responses over 50%) To please a relative or friend % To help in job % To obtain training for specific job % To widen career options % To assist entry to another course(s) % To gain a tertiary qualification % To satisfy an interest % To fill in time % To obtain personal satisfaction % Other %	9.8 63.6 59.5 80.3 20.6 36.5 61.9 8.0 71.7 9.2	To help in job 51%. Widen career options 65%. Satisfy interest 59%. Obtain personal satisfaction 65%.	Obtain training for specific job 67%. Widen career options 95%.* Gain a tertiary qualification 52%. Satisfy interest 57%. Obtain personal satisfaction 62%.	Obtain training for specific job 91%.* Widen career options 100%.* Satisfy interest 82%. Obtain personal satisfaction 82%. Please a relative or friend 55%.*	To help in job 54%. Widen career options 69%. Satisfy interest 54%. Obtain personal satisfaction 69%.
SOURCE OF INFORMATION ABOUT COURSE (responses over 30%) Major daily newspapers % Sunday papers % Regional or municipal papers % Television % TAFE information services or publicity % TAFE career/vocational counselling % Former or current TAFE students % Own experiences in TAFE % School careers advisers or staff % TAFE teaching staff % Government career services % Other Commonwealth or state government depts. % Parents/relatives % Local learning centre % Someone at work % Friend(s) %	21.3 6.8 17.9 8.7 47.0 18.4 33.7 27.3 14.2 23.9 10.5 10.3 16.5 6.9 28.2 28.9	TAFE information services or publicity 38%. Former or current TAFE students 30%.	TAFE information services or publicity 33%.	Regional or municipal papers 36%. TAFE information services or publicity 36%. Former or current TAFE students 36%. Someone at work 45%.	Former or current TAFE students 30%.

CLUSTER (number of members)	TOTAL SAMPLE n=751	13 (69)	11 (21)	15 (11)	16 (13)
COLLEGE STAFF HELPED RESPONDENTS WITH ANY PROBLEMS. YES %	8.7	2.9	9.5	9.1	0
COLLEGE STAFF ENCOURAGED RESPONDENTS TO CONTINUE WITH STUDIES. YES %	11.9	10.1	14.3	0	15.4

*Indicates that the value for the cluster is significantly higher than the sample value (at the 0.05 level of significance).

** Indicates that the value for the cluster is significantly lower than the sample value (at the 0.05 level of significance).

TABLE 51 (PART 1): PROFILES OF THE CLUSTERS OF LATER WITHDRAWERS

CLUSTER (number of members)	TOTAL SAMPLE n=560	50 (61)	30 (179)	29 (63)	23 (14)
NATURE OF CLUSTER		Completed study objectives.	Inadequate study skills and lack of background knowledge.	Course uninteresting with disorganised staff and unstimulating teaching methods.	Course did not meet needs for another reason.
FEMALE PERCENTAGE	55	42	51	61	67
HOME STATUS (responses over 20%)		Partner and family 33%. Parents 40%.	Partner and family 29%. Parents 38%.	Partner and family 30%. Parents 37%.	Partner and family 57%. Parents 21%.
Partner and family %	33.0				
Partner %	15.4				
Parents %	30.5				
Alone %	8.4				
Friend(s) %	5.9				
Other %	2.1				
AVERAGE AGE (years)	27.0	26.5	26.1	25.6	27.7
HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION COMPLETED (responses over 20%)		Year 10 or 11 42%. Matriculation or Year 12 29%.	Year 10 or 11 48%. Matriculation or Year 12 25%.	Year 10 or 11 41%. Matriculation or Year 12 32%.	Year 10 or 11 29%. Matriculation or Year 12 29%. Degree or diploma 21%.
Year 9 or less %	8.4				
Year 10 or 11 %	41.8				
Matriculation or Year 12 %	27.7				
Post Secondary Cert. %	9.8				
Degree or Diploma %	9.5				
NON-AUSTRALIAN BORN %	26	31	25	24	36
MIGRANT STATUS %	19	28	17	14	29
ENGLISH FIRST LANGUAGE. NO %	7	12	7	3	21
SPEAK LANGUAGE OTHER THAN ENGLISH REGULARLY %	13	21	14	5	21
ENGLISH SPEAKING ABILITY (higher figure - less ability)	Mean 1.08	1.08	1.11	1.11	1.00
ENGLISH WRITING ABILITY (higher figure - less ability)	Mean 1.10	1.10	1.20	1.13	1.07
ENGLISH READING ABILITY (higher figure - less ability)	Mean 1.14	1.10	1.18	1.13	1.08

CLUSTER (number of members)	TOTAL SAMPLE n=560	50 (61)	30 (179)	29 (63)	23 (14)
OCCUPATION (responses over 20%)		Science/Technology 22%. Business/Secretarial 55%. Other occupations (unrelated to course) 24%.	Business/Secretarial 42%. Other occupations (unrelated to course) 32%.	Business/Secretarial 54%.* Other occupations (unrelated to course) 26%.	Business/Secretarial 33%. Other occupations (unrelated to course) 56%.
Science/technology %	13.0				
Horticultural/rural %	0.9				
Fashion (excluding hairdressing) %	1.6				
Business/secretarial %	31.8				
Other occupations (related to course) %	2.1				
Other occupations (unrelated to course) %	28.8				
UNEMPLOYED AND REGISTERED WITH CES %	7.0	4.9	10.1	9.5	0
UNEMPLOYED AND NOT REGISTERED WITH CES %	2.0	0	1.7	3.2	7.1
FULL TIME HOME DUTIES %	13.8	1.6	10.6	11.1	28.6
ENGAGED IN VOLUNTARY COMMUNITY SERVICE - FULL-TIME %	0.4	0	0.6	0	0
ENGAGED IN VOLUNTARY COMMUNITY SERVICE - PART-TIME %	3.0	0	2.8	4.8	0
COURSES IN WHICH STUDENTS ENROLLED (responses over 20%)		Science/Technology 33%. Business/Secretarial 62%.*	Science/Technology 23%. Business/Secretarial 55%.*	Business/Secretarial 59%.*	Science/Technology 23%. Fashion (excluding hairdressing) 23%. Business/Secretarial 54%.
Science/technology %	20.5				
Horticulture/rural %					
Fashion (excluding hairdressing) %	13.9				
Business/secretarial %	49.8				
Other %	6.1				
NUMBER OF COURSE SUBJECTS ENROLLED	Mean 2.66	3.04	2.84	2.61	2.08
NUMBER OF COLLEGES ATTENDED	Mean 1.14	1.10	1.10	1.02	1.10
COLLEGE ATTENDANCE MODE %	72.5	73.8	73.7	74.6	71.4

CLUSTER (number of members)	TOTAL SAMPLE n=560	50 (61)	30 (179)	29 (63)	23 (14)
EXTERNAL STUDIES MODE %	9.3	6.6	10.6	7.9	21.4
PART COLLEGE ATTENDANCE AND PART EXTERNAL STUDIES MODE %	12.0	13.1	13.4	14.3	0
REASONS FOR ENROLLING (responses over 50%)		To help in job 92%.* Obtain training for specific job 80%.* Widen career options 85%.	To help in job 67%. Obtain training for specific job 69%. Widen career options 85%.	To help in job 57%. Obtain training for specific job 56%. Widen career options 79%.	To help in job 50%. Widen career options 71% Satisfy interest 64%.
To please a relative or friend %	11.0	Satisfy interest 69%.	Satisfy interest 70%.	Satisfy interest 70%.	Obtain personal satisfaction 79%.
To help in job %	58.9	Obtain personal satisfaction 80%.	Obtain personal satisfaction 76%.	Obtain personal satisfaction 73%.	
To obtain training for specific job %	55.8				
To widen career options %	75.2				
To assist entry to another course(s) %	18.8				
To gain a tertiary qualification %	35.4				
To satisfy an interest %	65.7				
To fill in time %	10.0				
To obtain personal satisfaction %	73.1				
Other %	6.8				

CLUSTER (number of members)	TOTAL SAMPLE n=560	50 (61)	30 (179)	29 (63)	23 (14)
SOURCES OF INFORMATION ABOUT COURSE (responses over 30%)		Major daily newspapers 34%. Regional or municipal papers 34%. TAFE information services or publicity 56%. TAFE teaching staff 49%. Former or current TAFE students 48%.* Own experiences in TAFE 39%. Someone at work 51%.* Friend(s) 44%.	Major daily newspapers 27%. TAFE information services or publicity 57%. TAFE teaching staff 34%. Former or current TAFE students 41%. Own experiences in TAFE 37%.	TAFE information services or publicity 56%. Former or current TAFE students 32%.	TAFE information services or publicity 43%.
Major daily newspapers %	23.7				
Sunday papers %	9.1				
Regional or municipal papers %	21.6				
Television %	9.5				
Former or current TAFE students %	32.4				
Own experience in TAFE %	30.9				
Schools careers advisers or staff %	15.9				
Government career services %	11.0				
Other Commonwealth or state government depts. %	11.0				
Parents/relatives %	18.3				
TAFE information services or publicity %	49.5				
TAFE career/vocational counselling %	18.2				
TAFE teaching staff %	28.6				
Local learning centre %	6.9				
Someone at work %	25.9				
Friend(s) %	29.2				
TIME BETWEEN ENROLMENT AND STARTING COURSE (responses over 30%)		1-4 weeks 61%.	1-4 weeks 58%.	1-4 weeks 67%.	1-4 weeks 64%.
1-6 days %	24.5				
1-4 weeks %	57.7				
1-4 months %	10.9				
4-8 months %	2.0				
8-12 months %	0.4				
Longer %	0.5				
INFORMED OF COSTS. YES %	75.2	75.4	74.3	79.4	71.4
INFORMED OF OBLIGATIONS TO ATTEND CLASSES. YES %	74.3	85.2	78.2	61.9	42.9**
INFORMED OF OBLIGATIONS TO COMPLETE COURSE ASSIGNMENTS. YES %	76.6	85.2	83.2	66.7	50.0

CLUSTER (number of members)	TOTAL SAMPLE n=560	50 (61)	30 (179)	29 (63)	23 (14)
INFORMED OF OBLIGATIONS FOR REGULAR STUDY. YES %	73.2	82.0	82.1	60.3	57.1
INFORMED OF RESOURCES/ SERVICES TO HELP COMPLETE STUDIES. YES %	64.5	78.7*	63.7	50.8**	42.9
INFORMED OF RESOURCES/ SERVICES TO SEEK ADVICE. YES %	57.1	75.4*	53.6	39.7**	35.7
INFORMED OF RESOURCES/ SERVICES TO FEEL AT EASE IN THE COLLEGE. YES %	58.4	70.5	52.5	50.8	42.9
ADVISED COLLEGE OF INTENTION TO WITHDRAW. YES %	45.0	42.7	46.4	34.9	42.9
COLLEGE STAFF HELPED IN DECISION TO WITHDRAW. YES %	8.9	13.1	10.6	7.9	0
COLLEGE STAFF CONTACTED STUDENT ABOUT DECISION TO WITHDRAW. YES %	15.0	18.0	13.4	12.7	7.1
COLLEGE STAFF HELPED RESPONDENTS WITH ANY PROBLEMS. YES %	11.3	14.8	12.3	4.8	7.1
COLLEGE STAFF ENCOURAGED RESPONDENT TO CONTINUE WITH STUDIES. YES %	16.3	19.7	17.3	6.4	7.1

* Indicates that the value for the cluster is significantly higher than the sample value (at the 0.05 level of significance).

** Indicates that the value for the cluster is significantly lower than the sample value (at the 0.05 level of significance).

TABLE 51 (PART 2): PROFILES OF THE CLUSTERS OF LATER WITHDRAWERS

CLUSTER (number of members)	TOTAL SAMPLE n=560	21 (11)	19 (67)	11 (23)	22 (30)	3 (45)
NATURE OF CLUSTER		Imminent failure and course to difficult.	Finding employment prevented continuation.	Family commitments and mix of home, work and study.	Unexpected events not specified in questionnaire.	Other practical, work related or health problems.
FEMALE PERCENTAGE	55	73	48	91*	50	68
HOME STATUS (responses over 20%)		Partner and family 30% Parents 40%.	Partner and family 31% Parents 26%.	Partner and family 68% Partner 23%.	Partner and family 34% Parents 28%.	Partner and family 51% Parents 24%.
Partner and family %	33.0					
Partner %	15.4					
Parents %	30.5					
Alone %	8.4					
Friend(s) %	5.9					
Other %	2.1					
AVERAGE AGE (years)	27.0	27.9	26.6	31.2*	29.1	28.9
HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION COMPLETED (responses over 20%)		Year 10 or 11 73%.*	Year 10 or 11 32% Matriculation or Year 12 36%.	Year 9 or less 22% Year 10 or 11 39%.	Year 10 or 11 41% Matriculation or Year 12 31%.	Year 10 or 11 38% Matriculation or Year 12 33%.
Year 9 or less %	8.4					
Year 10 or 11 %	41.8					
Matriculation or Year 12 %	27.7					
Post Secondary Cert. Degree or Diploma %	9.8 9.5					
NON-AUSTRALIAN BORN %	26	9	24	26	20	31
MIGRANT STATUS %	19	9	22	17	20	20
ENGLISH FIRST LANGUAGE, NO %	7	0	9	0	13	7
SPEAK LANGUAGE OTHER THAN ENGLISH REGULARLY %	13	0	15	0	13	13
ENGLISH SPEAKING ABILITY (higher figure - less ability)	Mean 1.08	1.00	1.14	1.09	1.17	1.02
ENGLISH WRITING ABILITY (higher figure - less ability)	Mean 1.10	1.36	1.23**	1.09	1.27	1.09
ENGLISH READING ABILITY (higher figure - less ability)	Mean 1.14	1.36**	1.12	1.09	1.23	1.04

CLUSTER (number of members)	TOTAL SAMPLE n=560	21 (11)	19 (67)	11 (23)	22 (30)	3 (45)
OCCUPATION (responses over 20%)		Science/Technology 25%.	Science/Technology 21%.	Business/Secretarial 50%.	Science/Technology 26%.	Science/Technology 21%.
Science/technology %	13.0	Business/Secretarial 25%.	Business/Secretarial 26%.	Other occupations (unrelated to course) 43%.	Business/Secretarial 26%.	Business/Secretarial 29%.
Horticulture/rural %	0.9	Other occupations (unrelated to course) 50%.	Other occupations (unrelated to course) 44%.*		Other occupations (unrelated to course) 37%.	Other occupations (unrelated to course) 44%.
Fashion (excluding hairdressing) %	1.6					
Business/secretarial %	31.8					
Other occupations (related to course) %	2.1					
Other occupations (unrelated to course) %	28.8					
UNEMPLOYED AND REGISTERED WITH CES %	7.0	9.1	4.5	4.3	6.7	0
UNEMPLOYED AND NOT REGISTERED WITH CES %	2.0	0	0	0	3.3	4.4
FULL TIME HOME DUTIES %	13.8	27.3	4.5	39.1*	16.7	31.1*
ENGAGED IN VOLUNTARY COMMUNITY SERVICE - FULL-TIME	0.4	0	0	0	0	0
ENGAGED IN VOLUNTARY COMMUNITY SERVICE - PART-TIME %	3.0	18.2*	0	4.3	10.0	4.4
COURSES IN WHICH STUDENTS ENROLLED (responses over 20%)		Science/Technology 27%.	Science/Technology 32%.	Fashion (excluding hairdressing) 52%.	Science/Technology 32%.	Science/Technology 20%.
Science/technology %	20.5	Business/Secretarial 55%.	Business/Secretarial 43%.	Business/Secretarial 43%.	Business/Secretarial 32%.	Fashion (excluding hairdressing) 36%.
Horticulture/rural %						Business/secretarial 39%.
Fashion (excluding hairdressing) %	13.9					
Business/secretarial %	49.8					
Other %	6.1					
NUMBER OF COURSE SUBJECTS ENROLLED	Mean 2.66	2.50	3.00	2.25	2.62	1.98
NUMBER OF COLLEGES ATTENDED	Mean 1.14	1.00	1.02	1.00	1.04	1.00
COLLEGE ATTENDANCE MODE %	72.5	54.5	71.6	60.9	76.7	88.9*

CLUSTER (number of members)	TOTAL SAMPLE n=560	21 (11)	19 (67)	11 (23)	22 (30)	3 (45)
SOURCES OF INFORMATION ABOUT COURSE (responses over 30%)		TAFE information services or publicity 36%.	TAFE information services or publicity 42%.	Regional or Municipal papers 35%.	Major daily newspapers 33%.	TAFE information services or publicity 42%.
Major daily newspapers %	23.7	Own experiences in TAFE 36%.	Own experiences in TAFE 33%.	TAFE information services or publicity 43%.	TAFE information services or publicity 37%.	Friend(s) 38%.
Sunday papers %	9.1			Former or current TAFE students 39%.	TAFE teaching staff 43%.	
Regional or municipal papers %	21.6			Own experience in TAFE 35%.	Someone at work 37%.	
Television %	9.5					
Former or current TAFE students %	32.4					
Own experience in TAFE %	30.9					
Schools careers advisers or staff %	15.9					
Government career services %	11.0					
Other Commonwealth or state government depts. %	11.0					
Parents/relatives %	18.3					
TAFE information services or publicity %	49.5					
TAFE career/vocational counselling %	18.2					
TAFE teaching staff %	28.6					
Local learning centre %	6.9					
Someone at work %	25.9					
Friend(s) %	29.2					
TIME BETWEEN ENROLMENT AND STARTING COURSE (responses over 30%)		1-4 weeks 82%.	1-4 weeks 58%.	1-4 weeks 78%.	1-6 days 33% 1-4 weeks 47%.	1-6 days 33 %
1-6 days %	24.5					
1-4 weeks %	57.7					
1-4 months %	10.9					
4-8 months %	2.0					
8-12 months %	0.4					
Longer %	0.5					
INFORMED OF COSTS. YES %	75.2	72.7	76.1	82.6	86.7	84.4
INFORMED OF OBLIGATIONS TO ATTEND CLASSES. YES %	74.3	90.9	74.6	69.6	86.7	73.3
INFORMED OF OBLIGATIONS TO COMPLETE COURSE ASSIGNMENTS. YES %	78.6	81.8	73.1	73.9	90.0*	73.3

CLUSTER (number of members)	TOTAL SAMPLE n=560	21 (11)	19 (67)	11 (23)	22 (30)	3 (45)
EXTERNAL STUDIES MODE %	9.3	9.1	14.9	4.3	0	4.4
PART COLLEGE ATTENDANCE AND PART EXTERNAL STUDIES MODE %	12.0	27.3	11.9	21.7	10.0	2.2
REASONS FOR ENROLLING (responses over 50%)						
To please a relative or friend %	11.0	Widen career options 64%. Satisfy interest 55%. Obtain personal satisfaction 73%.	To help in job 51%. Widen career options 81%. Satisfy interest 64%. Obtain personal satisfaction 69%.	Satisfy interest 69%. Obtain personal satisfaction 87%.	To help in job 63%. Obtain training for specific job 53%. Widen career options 77%. Satisfy interest 70%. Obtain personal satisfaction 83%.	Widen career options 51%.** Satisfy interest 67%. Obtain personal satisfaction 80%.
To help in job %	58.9					
To obtain training for specific job %	55.8					
To widen career options %	75.2					
To assist entry to another course(s) %	18.8					
To gain a tertiary qualification %	35.4					
To fill in time %	10.0					
To obtain personal satisfaction %	73.1					
Other %	6.8					

CLUSTER (number of members)	TOTAL SAMPLE n=560	21 (11)	19 (67)	11 (23)	22 (30)	3 (45)
INFORMED OF OBLIGATIONS FOR REGULAR STUDY. YES %	73.2	90.9	71.6	60.9	80.0	62.2
INFORMED OF RESOURCES/ SERVICES TO HELP COMPLETE STUDIES. YES %	64.5	81.8	65.7	52.2	73.3	68.9
INFORMED OF RESOURCES/ SERVICES TO SEEK ADVICE. YES %	57.1	81.8	64.2	56.5	73.3	57.8
INFORMED OF RESOURCES/ SERVICES TO FEEL AT EASE IN THE COLLEGE. YES %	58.4	72.7	65.7	60.9	76.7*	60.0
ADVISED COLLEGE OF INTENTION TO WITHDRAW. YES %	45.0	54.6	43.3	47.8	63.3	55.6
COLLEGE STAFF HELPED IN DECISION TO WITHDRAW. YES %	8.9	18.1	6.0	13.0	3.3	6.7
COLLEGE STAFF CONTACTED STUDENT ABOUT DECISION TO WITHDRAW. YES %	15.0	9.1	25.4*	21.7	16.7	15.6
COLLEGE STAFF HELPED RESPONDENTS WITH ANY PROBLEMS. YES %	11.3	36.4*	11.9	13.0	10.0	11.1
COLLEGE STAFF ENCOURAGED RESPONDENT TO CONTINUE WITH STUDIES. YES %	16.3	45.5*	13.4	26.1	23.3	17.8

* Indicates that the value for the cluster is significantly higher than the sample value (at the 0.05 level of significance).

** Indicates that the value for the cluster is significantly lower than the sample value (at the 0.05 level of significance).

TABLE 52 (PART 1): PROFILES OF THE CLUSTERS OF PERSISTERS

CLUSTER (number of members)	TOTAL SAMPLE n=607	80 (55)	60 (48)	37 (67)	55 (42)
NATURE OF CLUSTER		Inadequate study skills affected by pressure of home duties.	Inadequate study skills.	The mix of home, work and study proved difficult with inadequate skills and and unstimulating teaching.	The mix of home, work and study proved difficult.
FEMALE PERCENTAGE	48	45	42	41	43
HOME STATUS (responses over 20%)		Partner and family 41%. Parents 24%	Partner and family 29%. Parents 33%	Partner and family 35%. Parents 28%	Partner and family 60%. Partner 26%.
Partner and family %	38.7				
Partner %	17.5				
Parents %	23.9				
Alone %	7.7				
Friend(s) %	4.8				
Other %	5.1				
AVERAGE AGE (years)	25.3	27.6*	26.5	27.4*	29.7*
HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION COMPLETED (responses over 20%)		Year 10 or 11 47%. Matriculation or Year 12 31%.	Year 10 or 11 57%.* Matriculation or Year 12 28%.	Year 10 or 11 42%. Matriculation or Year 12 43%.	Year 10 or 11 33%. Matriculation or Year 12 38%.
Year 9 or less %	8.7				
Year 10 or 11 %	38.9				
Matriculation or Year 12 %	32.0				
Post Secondary Cert.	9.2				
Degree or Diploma %	9.1				
NON-AUSTRALIAN BORN %	20	13	13	22	12
MIGRANT STATUS %	15	12	13	13	5
ENGLISH FIRST LANGUAGE. NO %	5	7	0	5	2
SPEAK LANGUAGE OTHER THAN ENGLISH REGULARLY %	11	11	2	8	2
ENGLISH SPEAKING ABILITY (higher figure - less ability)	Mean 1.10	1.07	1.19**	1.13	1.07
ENGLISH WRITING ABILITY (higher figure - less ability)	Mean 1.11	1.15	1.22**	1.21**	1.12

CLUSTER (number of members)	TOTAL SAMPLE n=607	80 (55)	60 (48)	37 (67)	55 (42)
ENGLISH READING ABILITY (higher figure - less ability)	Mean 1.13	1.11	1.22**	1.13	1.07
OCCUPATION (responses over 20%)		Science/Technology 33%. Business/Secretarial 44%.	Science/Technology 26%. Business/Secretarial 42%. Other occupations (unrelated to course) 24%.	Science/Technology 27%. Business/Secretarial 45%.	Science/Technology 31%. Business/Secretarial 40%.
Science/technology %	19.9				
Horticulture/rural %	5.8				
Fashion (excluding hairdressing %	0.7				
Business/secretarial %	29.7				
Other occupations (related to course) %	1.0				
Other occupations (unrelated to course) %	21.4				
UNEMPLOYED AND REGISTERED WITH CES %	6.3	3.6	12.5	7.5	0
UNEMPLOYED AND NOT REGISTERED WITH CES %	5.1	3.6	2.1	6.0	4.8
FULL TIME HOME DUTIES %	13.2	10.9	6.3	7.5	11.9
ENGAGED IN VOLUNTARY COMMUNITY SERVICE - FULL-TIME %	0.3	0	0	0	0
ENGAGED IN VOLUNTARY COMMUNITY SERVICE - PART-TIME %	4.6	3.6	4.2	6.0	7.1
COURSE TITLE (responses over 20%)		Science/Technology 37%. Business/Secretarial 52%.	Science/Technology 23%. Business/Secretarial 53%.	Science/Technology 27%. Business/Secretarial 47%.	Science/Technology 27%. Business/Secretarial 46%.
Science/technology %	24.9				
Horticulture/rural %	11.7				
Fashion (excluding hairdressing %	12.5				
Business/secretarial %	44.8				
Other %	2.6				
NUMBER OF COURSE SUBJECTS ENROLLED	Mean 2.79	2.86	3.04	3.35*	2.82
NUMBER OF COLLEGES ATTENDED	Mean 1.08	1.10	1.39	1.10	1.11

CLUSTER (number of members)	TOTAL SAMPLE n=607	80 (55)	60 (48)	37 (67)	55 (42)
COLLEGE ATTENDANCE MODE %	71.8	63.6	56.3**	80.6	71.4
EXTERNAL STUDIES MODE %	17.5	29.1*	18.8	14.9	14.3
PART COLLEGE ATTENDANCE AND PART EXTERNAL STUDIES MODE %	9.4	7.3	25.0*	4.5	11.9
REASONS FOR ENROLLING (responses over 50%)		To help in job 78%. Obtain training for specific job 67%. Widen career options 91%. Satisfy interest 71%. Obtain personal satisfaction 82%.	To help in job 67%. Obtain training for specific job 56%. Widen career options 87%. Satisfy interest 65%. Obtain personal satisfaction 85%.	To help in job 79%. Obtain training for specific job 73%. Widen career options 91%. Satisfy interest 76%. Obtain personal satisfaction 82%.	To help in job 69%. Obtain training for specific job 67%. Widen career options 74%. Satisfy interest 76%. Obtain personal satisfaction 76%.
To please a relative or friend %	8.1				
To help in job %	64.1				
To obtain training for specific job %	62.1				
To widen career options %	79.8				
To assist entry to another course(s)	28.0				
To gain a tertiary qualification %	41.2				
To satisfy an interest %	74.4				
To fill in time %	7.1				
To obtain personal satisfaction %	81.3				
Other %	9.7				

CLUSTER (number of members)	TOTAL SAMPLE n=607	80 (55)	60 (48)	37 (67)	55 (42)
SOURCES OF INFORMATION ABOUT COURSE (responses over 30%)		TAFE information services or publicity 62%.* TAFE teaching staff 33%. Former or current TAFE students 42%. Own experience in TAFE 33%. Someone at work 35%. Friend(s) 31%.	TAFE information services or publicity 42%. Former or current TAFE students 40%. Friend(s) 37%.	TAFE information services or publicity 49%. Former or current TAFE students 36%. Someone at work 39%.	TAFE information services or publicity 48%. TAFE teaching staff 45%. Own experiences in TAFE 33%. Friend(s) 43%.
Major daily newspapers %	25.6				
Sunday papers %	6.5				
Regional or municipal papers %	17.8				
Television %	6.7				
TAFE information services or publicity %	47.1				
Former or current TAFE students %	38.4				
Own experiences in TAFE %	34.0				
School careers advisers or staff %	12.7				
Government career services %	7.1				
Other Commonwealth or state government depts. %	7.0				
Parents/relatives %	16.8				
Local learning centre %	6.1				
Someone at work %	31.0				
Friend(s) %	34.7				
TAFE career/vocational counselling %	14.5				
TAFE teaching staff %	30.0				
TIME BETWEEN ENROLMENT AND STARTING COURSE (responses over 30%)		1-4 weeks 69%.	1-4 weeks 58%.	1-4 weeks 51%.	1-6 days 31%. 1-4 weeks 60%.
1-6 days %	20.6				
1-4 weeks %	59.0				
1-4 months %	15.7				
4-8 months %	1.5				
8-12 months %	0.3				
Longer %	0.5				
INFORMED OF COSTS. YES %	80.2	78.2	83.3	82.1	88.1
INFORMED OF OBLIGATIONS TO ATTEND CLASSES. YES %	76.8	65.4	81.2	82.1	81.0
INFORMED OF OBLIGATIONS TO COMPLETE COURSE ASSIGNMENTS. YES %	82.2	72.7	85.4	80.6	88.1

CLUSTER (number of members)	TOTAL SAMPLE n=607	80 (55)	60 (48)	37 (67)	55 (42)
INFORMED OF OBLIGATIONS TO REGULAR STUDY. YES %	74.8	72.7	81.3	70.1	76.2
INFORMED OF RESOURCES/ SERVICES TO HELP COMPLETED STUDIES. YES %	74.3	74.6	72.9	64.2	78.6
INFORMED OF RESOURCES/ SERVICES TO SEEK ADVICE. YES %	62.3	58.2	62.5	52.2	66.7
INFORMED OF RESOURCES/ SERVICES TO FEEL AT EASE IN THE COLLEGE. YES %	65.6	56.4	68.8	56.7	66.7
SERIOUSLY CONSIDERED WITHDRAWING %	13.0	20.0	6.3	37.9*	14.3
ADVISED COLLEGE OF INTENTION TO WITHDRAW. YES % N=258	29.7	25.6 n=43	14.3** n=21	48.1* n=52	23.1 n=26
COLLEGE STAFF HELPED IN DECISION TO WITHDRAW. YES % n=77	67.5	87.5 n=8	100* n=4	47.6 n=21	83.3 n=6
COLLEGE STAFF FOLLOWED UP PROBLEMS LATER. YES % n=77	48.1	75.0 n=8	100 n=8	21.7** n=23	66.7 n=6

* Indicates that the value for the cluster is significantly higher than the sample value (at the 0.05 level of significance).

** Indicates that the value for the cluster is significantly lower than the sample value (at the 0.05 level of significance).

NOTE: The last three questions were answered by the subset of persisters who had either seriously considered withdrawing or who had had some real concerns. Consequently the sizes of the clusters were reduced also. The 'n' figures shown are the actual numbers in sample or cluster.

TABLE 52 (PART 2): PROFILES OF THE CLUSTERS OF PERSISTERS

CLUSTER (number of members)	TOTAL SAMPLE n=607	21 (48)	15 (47)	20 (53)	28 (12)	38 (11)
NATURE OF CLUSTER		Staff disorganised and teaching methods not stimulating.	Unexpected events not specified in questionnaire.	Completed study objective.	Lack of background knowledge.	Effect of study on social/sporting interests.
FEMALE PERCENTAGE	48	43	51	50	50	18
HOME STATUS (responses over 20%)		Partner and family 28%. Partner 28%. Parents 33%.	Partner and family 43%. Partner 24%.	Partner and family 33%. Parents 40%.	Partner and family 33%. Parents 33%.	Parents 55%.*
Partner and family %	38.7					
Partner %	17.5					
Parents %	23.9					
Alone %	7.7					
Friend(s) %	4.8					
Other %	5.1					
AVERAGE AGE (years)	25.3	27.7*	29.9*	27.0	28.2*	24.1
HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION COMPLETED (responses over 20%)		Year 10 or 11 28%. Matriculation or Year 12 34%. Degree or Diploma 23%.*	Year 10 or 11 33%. Matriculation or Year 12 37%.	Year 10 or 11 56%.* Matriculation or Year 12 28%.	Year 10 or 11 25%. Matriculation or Year 12 42%.	Year 10 or 11 36%. Matriculation or Year 12 45%.
Year 9 or less %	8.7					
Year 10 or 11 %	38.9					
Matriculation or Year 12 %	32.0					
Post Secondary cert. %	9.2					
Degree or Diploma %	9.1					
NON-AUSTRALIAN BORN %	20	27	26	25	17	0
MIGRANT STATUS %	15	15	11	21	8	0
ENGLISH FIRST LANGUAGE. NO %	5	4	4	11	8	0
SPEAK LANGUAGE OTHER THAN ENGLISH REGULARLY %	11	20*	9	19*	8	0
ENGLISH SPEAKING ABILITY (higher figure - less ability)	Mean 1.10	1.10	1.09	1.12	1.08	1.00
ENGLISH WRITING ABILITY (higher figure - less ability)	Mean 1.11	1.19	1.06	1.19	1.17	1.18
ENGLISH READING ABILITY (higher figure - less ability)	Mean 1.13	1.5	1.13	1.22**	1.08	1.09

CLUSTER (number of members)	TOTAL SAMPLE n=607	21 (48)	15 (47)	20 (53)	28 (12)	38 (11)
OCCUPATION (responses over 20%)		Business/Secretarial 43%.	Science/Technology 22%.	Science/Technology 23%.	Science/Technology 27%.	Science/Technology 36%.
Science/technology %	19.9	Other occupations (unrelated to course) 27%.	Business/Secretarial 35%.	Business/Secretarial 41%.	Business/Secretarial 27%.	Business/Secretarial 45%.
Horticulture/rural %	5.8		Other occupations (unrelated to course) 35%.*	Other occupations (unrelated to course) 33%.*	Other occupations (unrelated to course) 36%.	
Fashion (excluding hairdressing) %	0.7					
Business/secretarial %	29.7					
Other occupations (related to course) %	1.0					
Other occupations (unrelated to course) %	21.4					
UNEMPLOYED AND REGISTERED WITH CES %	6.3	6.3	2.1	13.2*	8.3	0
UNEMPLOYED AND NOT REGISTERED WITH CES %	5.1	0	8.5	9.4	0	0
FULL TIME HOME DUTIES %	13.2	2.1	10.6	13.2	8.3	0
ENGAGED IN VOLUNTARY COMMUNITY SERVICE - FULL-TIME %	0.3	0	0	0	0	
ENGAGED IN VOLUNTARY COMMUNITY SERVICE - PART-TIME %	4.6	0	2.1	11.3*	8.3	0
COURSE TITLE (responses over 20%)		Science/Technology 29%.	Science/Technology 26%.	Science/Technology 22%.	Science/Technology 33%.	Science/Technology 36%.
Science/technology %	24.9	Business/Secretarial 46%.	Business/Secretarial 50%.	Business/Secretarial 62%.	Business/Secretarial 42%.	Business/Secretarial 45%.
Horticulture/rural %	11.7					
Fashion (excluding hairdressing) %	12.5					
Business/Secretarial %	44.8					
Other %	2.6					
NUMBER OF COURSE SUBJECTS ENROLLED %	Mean 2.79	3.55*	2.59	2.92	2.25	2.64
NUMBER OF COLLEGES ATTENDED	Mean 1.08	1.02	1.35	1.26	1.00	1.70
COLLEGE ATTENDANCE MODE %	71.8	81.3	61.7	71.7	83.3	90.9

CLUSTER (number of members)	TOTAL SAMPLE n=607	21 (48)	15 (47)	20 (53)	28 (12)	38 (11)
EXTERNAL STUDIES MODE %	17.5	8.3	31.9*	15.1	8.3	9.1
PART COLLEGE ATTENDANCE AND PART EXTERNAL STUDIES MODE %	9.4	8.3	4.3	11.3	0	0
REASONS FOR ENROLLING (responses over 50%)		To help in job 69%. Obtain training for specific job 69%. Widen career options 85%.	To help in job 62%. Obtain training for specific job 64%. Widen career options 77%. Satisfy interest 77%.	To help in job 81%.* Obtain training for specific job 87%.* Widen career options 94%.* Gain tertiary qualification 62%. Satisfy interest 77%. Obtain personal satisfaction 85%.	Widen career options. Satisfy interest 75%. Obtain personal satisfaction 83%.	To help in job 91%. Obtain training for specific job 73%. Widen career options 91%.
To please a relative or friend %	8.1					
To help in job %	64.1					
To obtain training for specific job %	62.1					
To widen career options %	79.8					
To assist entry to another course(s)	28.0					
To gain a tertiary qualification %	41.2					
To satisfy an interest %	74.4					
To fill in time %	7.1					
To obtain personal satisfaction %	81.3					
Other %	9.7					

CLUSTER (number of members)	TOTAL SAMPLE n=607	21 (48)	15 (47)	20 (53)	28 (12)	38 (11)
SOURCES OF INFORMATION ABOUT COURSE (responses over 30%)		TAFE information services or publicity 38%.	TAFE information services or publicity 53%.	TAFE information services or publicity 55%.	TAFE information services or publicity 42%.	TAFE information services or publicity 36%.
Major daily newspapers %	25.6	Former or current TAFE students 48%.	Former or current TAFE students 45%.	TAFE career/vocational counselling 30%.*		TAFE career/vocational counselling 36%.
Sunday papers %	6.5	Someone at work 50%.*	Someone at work 43%.	TAFE teaching staff 47%.*		TAFE teaching staff 45%.
Regional or municipal %	17.8	Friend(s) 31%.	Friend(s) 32%.	Former or current TAFE students 42%.		Schools careers advisers or staff 36%.
Television %	6.7			Own experiences in TAFE 43%.		Someone at work 55%.
TAFE information services or publicity	47.1					Friend(s) 36%.
Former or current TAFE students %	38.4					
Own experiences in TAFE %	34.0					
School careers advisers or staff %	12.7					
Government career services %	7.1					
Other Commonwealth or state government depts. %	7.0					
Parents/relatives %	16.8					
Local learning centre %	6.1					
Someone at work %	31.0					
Friend(s) %	34.7					
TAFE career/vocational counselling %	14.5					
TAFE teaching staff %	30.0					
TIME BETWEEN ENROLMENT AND STARTING COURSE (responses over 30%)		1-4 weeks 58%	1-4 weeks 66%	1-4 weeks 57%	1-4 weeks 75%	1-4 weeks 73%
1-6 days %	20.6					
1-4 weeks %	59.0					
1-4 months %	15.7					
4-8 months %	1.5					
8-12 months %	0.3					
Longer %	0.5					
INFORMED OF COSTS. YES %	80.2	64.6**	83.0	75.5	75.0	81.8
INFORMED OF OBLIGATIONS TO ATTEND CLASSES. YES %	76.8	77.1	79.2	69.8	58.3	63.6
INFORMED OF OBLIGATIONS TO COMPLETE COURSE ASSIGNMENTS. YES %	82.2	81.3	85.1	73.6	41.7**	63.6

CLUSTER (number of members)	TOTAL SAMPLE n=607	21 (48)	15 (47)	20 (53)	28 (12)	38 (11)
INFORMED OF OBLIGATIONS TO REGULAR STUDY. YES %	74.8	62.5	76.6	79.2	41.7**	72.7
INFORMED OF RESOURCES/ SERVICES TO HELP COMPLETE STUDIES. YES %	74.3	60.4	80.9	73.6	66.7	63.6
INFORMED OF RESOURCES/ SERVICES TO SEEK ADVICE. YES %	62.3	50.0	63.8	62.3	58.3	54.5
INFORMED OF RESOURCES/ SERVICES TO FEEL AT EASE IN THE COLLEGE. YES %	65.6	58.3	68.1	64.2	58.3	63.6
SERIOUSLY CONSIDERED WITHDRAWING	13.0	12.8	23.4	11.3	8.3	0
ADVISED COLLEGE OF INTENTION TO WITHDRAW. YES % n=258	29.7	28.6 n=21	42.3 n=26	31.6 n=19	25.0 n=4	0 n=4
COLLEGE STAFF HELPED IN DECISION TO WITHDRAW. YES % n=77	67.5	71.4 n=7	80.0 n=5	71.4 n=7	100 n=1	0 n=0
COLLEGE STAFF FOLLOWED UP PROBLEMS LATER. YES % n=77	48.1	20.0 n=8	25.0 n=4	80.0 n=5	100 n=1	0 n=0

* Indicates that the value for the cluster is significantly higher than the sample value (at the 0.05 level of significance).

** Indicates that the value for the cluster is significantly lower than the sample value (at the 0.05 level of significance).

NOTE: The last three questions were answered by the subject of persisters who had either seriously considered withdrawing or who had some real concerns. Consequently the sizes of the clusters were reduced also. The 'n' figures shown are the actual numbers in sample or clusters.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

As indicated in Section 1.2 (a), the sample of courses used in this study was chosen to provide a basis for generating the conclusions and the recommendations for policy. Therefore these conclusions and recommendations are written to apply to the first-year of all part-time TAFE certificate courses.

Table 45 shows the most important variables which caused withdrawal of or problems with persistence for first-year part-time TAFE certificate students. Foremost among these variables were the mix of home, work and study proved too much (part of the environmental factor) and students had difficulties in establishing study routines or organising study time (part of the academic factor). Further, Table 49 shows that 15 groups of withdrawers were identified in the cluster analyses.

Overall the principal reasons which caused the withdrawal of part-time TAFE certificate students or which caused difficulty for those students who persisted were from a mixture of the academic and environmental factors together with one background variable, namely regular travel to college after work proved too demanding.

Further, the specific factors most affecting withdrawing were often also prominent among those causing difficulties reported by persisters (Table 40d). This is consistent with the hypotheses of Mitchell (1974) and Lenning et al (1986) that persisters are able to identify and to overcome the dissatisfactions they might have with the college program. It follows then that actions taken to reduce attrition will also help to overcome the problems of persisters.

The actions which can be taken are dependent on the nature of the problem. Environmental factors are those over which the college has very little control and, as pointed out above, these often related to the difficulties associated with combining work, study and home life. Although a college can take no steps to vary the environment, it can take steps to reduce its impact on the student. This is summed up by one of the respondents interviewed who warned other students about accepting too heavy a load. It is RECOMMENDED that, counsellors, when interviewing students, should establish the work and home demands on them and advise them to tailor their programs to suit. It is better to do a little less with hope of success than to be forced to drop out from a too-heavy study load.

The college can have a direct effect on the academic factors. This study found five principal negative factors and one positive.

The negative factors turned on difficulties in studying effectively and uninteresting content and teaching methods.

One facile answer to the difficulties students have with studying effectively is to increase the standards of entry. Williams (1979) noted that submissions to The Committee of Inquiry into Education and Training on the 'need for more appropriate criteria for entry' to reduce attrition rates often conflicted with submissions advocating easier access discriminating in favour of students from working class or immigrant families. Such differences of judgement, which arise from different attitudes to the relative importance of various objectives, create problems in designing recommendations for action.

Even assuming that vocational courses are designed to meet the proper needs of the employees in these vocations and not to escalate the academic level of the courses, there are bound to be people who leave a course because they have difficulties in studying effectively enough to reach the standards required to qualify for a particular job.

This would suggest the adoption of strategies which are based on restricting entry to those equipped to cope with these courses. This creates a dilemma for TAFE. Which is better? A generous admissions policy with the risk of high drop-out and its concomitant costs to the public purse, or a restrictive admissions policy which ensures a relatively high proportion of success with lower overall costs and a dissatisfied group which has been denied entry.

There is another option. It is to recognise that many people who will have difficulties in studying effectively, will seek to enter TAFE courses and who therefore will be in high danger of dropping out. It is RECOMMENDED that special steps should be taken to identify people who enter TAFE courses with difficulties in studying effectively and to provide them with special programs to cope with their problems.

Nevertheless it should be understood that it is not within the capacity of a college to prevent a great deal of attrition. Further, there is some attrition that a college should not attempt to prevent as it may be in the best interest of the student.

One example of this occurs among the principal reasons for attrition identified in the current study. Some withdrew from their certificate courses because the parts they had completed enabled them to broaden their career options. This is consistent with a common view among TAFE authorities that students leave (as distinct from dropping out or failing) courses because they have achieved their own personal objectives for those courses.

A college should be concerned with student attrition which occurs because of institutional weaknesses or failures. When approached from this perspective, the goal becomes one of helping students to define and to achieve their educational and vocational objectives and so prevent the waste of individual and societal resources when these are not achieved.

The current study shows that this goal is enhanced by the personal involvement of the staff. Nearly half the students who intend to withdraw advised the college, presumably often through their lecturers. The evidence is that a positive response to the student at this stage will reduce drop-out, yet the evidence is also that this response occurs less often than it should. Therefore it is RECOMMENDED that students who indicate an intention to withdraw should be counselled immediately such indication is known.

Two of the principal problems reported by both withdrawers and persisters are that the teaching methods used did not stimulate interest nor was the course material interesting. This is a challenge both to TAFE lecturers and curriculum developers and it is RECOMMENDED that their training should reflect this challenge.

Although the demand among students for interesting course content and teaching methods is made plain in this study, they are not necessarily high priorities with TAFE lecturers. In his study of the continuing education needs of TAFE college lecturers, Hall (1987) surveyed the training needs of TAFE lecturers as identified by the principals and staff of TAFE colleges. The needs for management skills of the educational process was seen as an important or severe problem by 49% of respondents and the need to learn skills of curriculum development by 43%. By contrast 93% of respondents saw the need to update technical/vocational knowledge and skills in the area of teaching specialisation as an important or severe problem and 90% saw the need to keep abreast with general technological change similarly. It would seem that the priorities of students

(the clients) may be different from those of the lecturers (the providers). Attention is drawn again to the analogy (Section 2.2.2 (a) (v)) with the storekeeper who wonders what is wrong with his customers rather than his products and service.

All this having been said a note of caution should be sounded. Astin (1977) pointed out that boredom with courses may represent a handy rationalisation for failure which in reality may be attributable to other causes. He noted that there was a slight tendency for students with poorer grades to give boredom with courses as a reason for dropping out. This argument is consistent with the information, albeit limited, obtained at interview. No person who withdrew praised the lecturer, while those who persisted were almost fulsome in their praise.

In summary, it can be said that TAFE students can be divided into three broad groups with regard to withdrawal or persistence. They are

- . those who withdraw (or consider withdrawing) because they have achieved their study objectives.
- . those who, for a combination of reasons, find that they face problems such that they are not prepared to continue studying.
- . those who continue studying either because they do not encounter problems or because they persist regardless of the problems which they face.

With regard to the problems faced by students who withdraw, it would be useful to TAFE college and course administrators to know which of the 15 groups of withdrawers as identified by the cluster analyses occur for particular colleges and particular courses so that action may be taken to prevent or overcome similar difficulties for later enrollees. For example, if a college is finding that students withdraw because too much travel is involved in a particular course, it may be advisable to offer the course at another college or to introduce the external studies mode.

To obtain such information, exit interviews or questionnaires could be introduced with a view to identifying to which of the 15 groups of withdrawers students withdrawing from a particular college or course belong. If a questionnaire is used, it should be shorter than the one used in this study and simple enough to ensure a high rate of return and easy processing. The reasons for withdrawal identified in Tables 46 and 47 should be used in developing the questionnaire.

It is RECOMMENDED that college and course administrators monitor reasons for withdrawal through exit interviews or questionnaires. The 15 groups of withdrawers identified in this study should be used as the basis for such interviews or questionnaires.

The extent to which colleges are able to provide solutions to the problems faced by students is limited. However there are some things, particularly with regard to identifying reasons for withdrawal and taking remedial action on such matters as course organisation and delivery methods, which can be done. This report makes recommendations on these things.



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(Incorporated in South Australia)

**A SURVEY OF
PART-TIME STUDENTS WHO ARE
FIRST YEAR WITHDRAWERS FROM
TAFE CERTIFICATE COURSES, 1986**

THE QUESTIONNAIRE

According to TAFE records in 1986 you started, part-time a TAFE Certificate course or the equivalent and have now left that course.

There are many reasons for doing so.

Which of the following best describes your reason for leaving.
(Please circle one number.)

- I discontinued studies.....1
- I changed to full-time in the same course in 1986.....2
- I changed to full-time in another course in 1986.....3
- I changed to part-time in another course in 1986.....4

If you circled 2, 3 or 4, PLEASE PUT THE QUESTIONNAIRE in the pre-paid, addressed envelope and post it.

If you circled 1, PLEASE COMPLETE THE QUESTIONNAIRE by

1. Filling in details on pages 150 to 154.
2. Reading carefully the details on page 155 before proceeding beyond it.

PLEASE TELL US ABOUT YOURSELF

NOTE: WE ASSURE CONFIDENTIALITY

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CASE 1- 4
SURVEY 1 5

1. Personal details

(Please complete by filling in the details or ticking the appropriate box)

A. NAME:

B. HOME ADDRESS:

.....

POST CODE

Telephone: STD Code: Number:

C. SEX

Female ☐: Male ☐

D. HOME STATUS (Tick one box only)

Living with

1) wife and family ☐

2) wife ☐

3) parents ☐

4) alone ☐

5) friend/s ☐

Other (please specify) ☐

.....

E. AGE (Tick one box only)

1) Under 17 Years ☐

2) 17 - 20 ☐

3) 21 - 30 ☐

4) Over 30 ☐

F. HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION COMPLETED (Tick one box only)

1) Year 9 or less ☐

2) Year 10 or 11 ☐

3) Matriculation or Year 12 ☐

4) Post Secondary Certificate ☐

5) Degree or Diploma ☐

6- 9

10

11

12

13

1. Personal details (CONTINUED)G. COUNTRY OF BIRTH and USE OF LANGUAGE(Tick one box on each line)

YES NO

1) . Is your country of birth Australia? ☐ ☐

14

. Do you have migrant status? ☐ ☐

15

. Is English your first (or equally first) language? ☐ ☐

16

. Do you regularly speak any language other than English? ☐ ☐

17

2) Your ability with English? (Tick one box on each line)a) SPEAKING: Good ☐: Average ☐: Poor ☐

18

b) WRITING: Good ☐: Average ☐: Poor ☐

19

c) READING: Good ☐: Average ☐: Poor ☐

20

2. Your daily work

A. If you are employed, briefly describe your job.

1) TITLE:

21-22

2) BRIEF DESCRIPTION:

.....

.....

.....

.....

B. If not, are you

(Tick one box on each line)

YES NO

1) unemployed and registered with the C.E.S.? ☐ ☐

23

2) unemployed and not registered with the C.E.S. (Commonwealth Employment Service)? ☐ ☐

24

3) full-time home duties? ☐ ☐

25

4) engaged in voluntary community service

. full-time? ☐ ☐

26

. part-time? ☐ ☐

27

3. Your course details

(please complete by filling in the details or ticking the appropriate box)

- | | |
|---|-------|
| A. Name of your course | 28-29 |
| | |
| B. The number of course subjects enrolled in | 30 |
| C. The number of colleges you attended in doing the subjects. | 31 |
| D. Your form of study (please tick one box only) | |
| 1) College attendance ☐ | |
| 2) External studies (correspondence) ☐ | |
| 3) Part college attendance and part external studies ☐ | 32 |

4. Your reason/s for enrolling

Please show how important each of the following was in your decision to enrol. (Please tick each item appropriately)

NOTE: DON'T KNOW/NOT APPLICABLE

To fill in any box under this column, you should clearly "NOT KNOW" THE ANSWER or clearly see the item as "NOT APPLICABLE" e.g. any question on PREGNANCY may NOT BE APPLICABLE to males.

- | | | | | | |
|---|----------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|----|
| | DO NOT KNOW/NOT APPLICABLE | NOT IMPORTANT | IMPORTANT | VERY IMPORTANT | |
| 1. To please a relative or friend | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | 33 |
| 2. To help me in my job | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | 34 |
| 3. To obtain training for a specific job | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | 35 |
| 4. To widen career options | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | 36 |
| 5. To assist entry to another course/s | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | 37 |
| 6. To gain a tertiary qualification | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | 38 |
| 7. To satisfy an interest | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | 39 |
| 8. To fill in time until I decided what to do | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | 40 |
| 9. To obtain personal satisfaction | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | 41 |
| 10. Other (please specify) | | | | | |
| 1..... | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | 42 |
| 2..... | | | | | |

5. How did you come to know about the course?

How important was each of the following to you in knowing about your course? (Please tick each item appropriately)

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NOTE: DON'T KNOW/NOT APPLICABLE

To fill in any box under this column, you should clearly "NOT KNOW" THE ANSWER or clearly see the item as "NOT APPLICABLE" e.g. any question on PREGNANCY may NOT BE APPLICABLE to males.

	DON'T KNOW/NOT APPLICABLE	NOT IMPORTANT	IMPORTANT	VERY IMPORTANT	
A. MEDIA (course existence)					
1) Newspapers					
. Major daily newspapers	☐	☐	☐	☐	43
. Sunday papers	☐	☐	☐	☐	44
. Regional or municipal papers	☐	☐	☐	☐	45
2) Television					
. Advertising/publicity/news	☐	☐	☐	☐	46
B. TAFE (course existence/content)					
1) TAFE information services or publicity	☐	☐	☐	☐	47
2) TAFE career/vocational counselling	☐	☐	☐	☐	48
3) TAFE Teaching staff	☐	☐	☐	☐	49
4) Former or current TAFE student/s	☐	☐	☐	☐	50
5) Your own experiences in TAFE	☐	☐	☐	☐	51
C. OTHER AGENCY (course existence/content)					
1) School careers advisers or staff	☐	☐	☐	☐	52
2) Government career services	☐	☐	☐	☐	53
3) Other Commonwealth or State government department/s	☐	☐	☐	☐	54
D. (course existence/content)					
1) Parent(s)/relative	☐	☐	☐	☐	55
2) Local learning centre	☐	☐	☐	☐	56
3) Someone at work	☐	☐	☐	☐	57
4) Friend/s	☐	☐	☐	☐	58
E. Other (please specify)					
1).....	☐	☐	☐	☐	59
2).....					

6. Enrolling

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A. About how long was it between when you enrolled and when you started the course? (Tick one box only)

1 - 6 days ☐: 1 - 4 weeks ☐: 1 - 4 mths ☐
4 - 8 mths ☐: 8 - 12 mths ☐: More ☐

60

B. Were you informed on the following matters by College Staff? (Please tick each appropriate box)

	YES	NO	
1) Costs	☐	☐	61
2) Your obligations to attending classes	☐	☐	62
3) Your obligations to completing course assignments	☐	☐	63
4) Your obligations to regular study	☐	☐	64
5) The resources and services the college provided to help you to			
. complete your studies successfully	☐	☐	65
. know where to seek advice,			
e.g. counselling	☐	☐	66
. feel at ease in the college	☐	☐	67

7. Withdrawing

A. Did you advise the college of your intention to withdraw? (Tick one box)

YES ☐ NO ☐

68

B. Did college staff help you in making your decision (Tick one box)

☐ ☐

69

C. Did anyone from the college staff later (Tick one box on each line)

1) contact you about your withdrawal?	☐	☐	70
2) help you with any problems you were having?	☐	☐	71
3) encourage you to continue your studies?	☐	☐	72

THANK YOU. WE NOW HAVE A BETTER CHANCE TO UNDERSTAND FULLY YOUR ANSWER IN THE IMPORTANT SECTIONS THAT FOLLOW

PLEASE TURN TO PAGE 155

THE FOLLOWING PAGES ARE MOST IMPORTANT

They cover 12 factors, one or more of which may have been important in your decision to withdraw.

Please read carefully the title on each page and the few points immediately beneath it and assess the factor's importance in your decision to withdraw.

1. If you can't make a decision about the factor, that is, you DON'T KNOW, or recognise the factor as "NOT APPLICABLE",

GO STRAIGHT TO THE NEXT FACTOR

OR

If you assess the factor as "NOT IMPORTANT",

GO STRAIGHT TO THE NEXT FACTOR

2. If you assess the factor as IMPORTANT or VERY IMPORTANT, complete the items below the factor, then go to the next factor.

PLEASE PROCEED TO FACTOR 1. "ACHIEVEMENT OF STUDY OBJECTIVE"

1. ACHIEVEMENT OF STUDY OBJECTIVE

For example, did the study you had completed get you

- . a job?
- . a pay increase?
- . entry to another course?
- . relief from boredom?

I assess this factor in my decision to withdraw, as:
(Please tick one box)

- A. DON'T KNOW/NOT APPLICABLE ☐ { Go to next factor
B. NOT IMPORTANT ☐ {
C. IMPORTANT ☐ { Complete the items below,
D. VERY IMPORTANT ☐ { then go to the next factor

NOTE: DON'T KNOW/NOT APPLICABLE

To fill in any box under this column, you should clearly "NOT KNOW" THE ANSWER or clearly see the item as "NOT APPLICABLE" e.g. any question on PREGNANCY may NOT BE APPLICABLE to males.

The part of the course completed enabled me to:

1. get a job.
2. meet the needs of my employer.
3. get the skill/knowledge I needed for promotion.
4. get an increase in pay.
5. gain entry to another course.
6. broaden my career options.
7. keep studying while I determined what I wanted to do.
8. get enough training for my present job.
9. Other (please specify)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48 49 50 51 52 53 54 55 56 57 58 59 60 61 62 63 64 65 66 67 68 69 70 71 72 73 74 75 76 77 78 79 80 81 82 83 84 85 86 87 88 89 90 91 92 93 94 95 96 97 98 99 100

9

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1

2

PLEASE PROCEED TO FACTOR 2

2. COURSE (GENERAL and TEACHING)

For example, did you find the course

- . not what you expected?
- . too difficult?

or that teaching

- . methods lacked interest?
- . staff were not interested in you?
- . aids were not appropriate?

I assess this factor in my decision to withdraw, as:
(Please tick one box)

- A. DON'T KNOW/NOT APPLICABLE ☐ { Go to next factor
- B. NOT IMPORTANT ☐ {
- C. IMPORTANT ☐ { Complete the items below,
- D. VERY IMPORTANT ☐ { then go to the next factor

3

NOTE: DON'T KNOW/NOT APPLICABLE

To fill in any box under this column, you should clearly "NOT KNOW" THE ANSWER or clearly see the item as "NOT APPLICABLE"
e.g. any question on PREGNANCY may NOT BE APPLICABLE to males.

The course didn't meet my needs because:

1. I didn't find the course interesting.
2. The course didn't do what its publicity claimed.
3. The course was badly organised.
4. I found the course too difficult.
5. I believed I would fail.
6. The course was of date.
7. Other (please specify)

1.....
2.....

	DON'T KNOW/NOT APPLICABLE	NOT IMPORTANT	IMPORTANT	VERY IMPORTANT
1. I didn't find the course interesting.	☐	☐	☐	☐
2. The course didn't do what its publicity claimed.	☐	☐	☐	☐
3. The course was badly organised.	☐	☐	☐	☐
4. I found the course too difficult.	☐	☐	☐	☐
5. I believed I would fail.	☐	☐	☐	☐
6. The course was of date.	☐	☐	☐	☐
7. Other (please specify)	☐	☐	☐	☐
1.....	☐	☐	☐	☐
2.....	☐	☐	☐	☐

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

PLEASE GO TO 2 B ON PAGE 9

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2. COURSE (GENERAL and TEACHING) (CONTINUED)

2 B. TEACHING AND LEARNING

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NOTE: DON'T KNOW/NOT APPLICABLE

To fill in any box under this column, you should clearly "NOT KNOW" THE ANSWER or clearly see the item as "NOT APPLICABLE" e.g. any question on PREGNANCY may NOT BE APPLICABLE to males.

	NOT KNOWN/NOT APPLICABLE	NOT IMPORTANT	IMPORTANT	VERY IMPORTANT	
1. Teaching staff seemed disorganised.	☐	☐	☐	☐	11
2. Teaching staff didn't have sufficient knowledge of content.	☐	☐	☐	☐	12
3. Teaching methods did not stimulate my interest.	☐	☐	☐	☐	13
4. Teaching was not backed up by appropriate aids (Films, handouts, etc.).	☐	☐	☐	☐	14
5. Teaching staff were difficult to contact.	☐	☐	☐	☐	15
6. Teaching staff seemed disinterested in me.	☐	☐	☐	☐	16
7. Personal contact with my lecturer(s)/teacher(s) was unsatisfactory.	☐	☐	☐	☐	17
8. No opportunity existed to combine class teaching with correspondence or self-study programmes.	☐	☐	☐	☐	18
9. Other (please specify)	☐	☐	☐	☐	19
1.....	☐	☐	☐	☐	
2.....	☐	☐	☐	☐	

PLEASE PROCEED TO FACTOR 3

3. COLLEGE/COLLEGES

For example, did you find the college

- . impersonal?
- . lacked student facilities?
- . rules inflexible?
- . felt unsafe at night?

I assess this factor in my decision to withdraw, as:
(Please tick one box)

- A. DON'T KNOW/NOT APPLICABLE ☐ }
 B. NOT IMPORTANT ☐ } Go to next factor
- C. IMPORTANT ☐ }
 D. VERY IMPORTANT ☐ } Complete the items below,
 then go to the next factor

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20

NOTE: DON'T KNOW/NOT APPLICABLE

To fill in any box under this column, you should clearly "NOT KNOW" THE ANSWER or clearly see the item as "NOT APPLICABLE" e.g. any question on PREGNANCY may NOT BE APPLICABLE to males.

	DON'T KNOW/NOT APPLICABLE	NOT IMPORTANT	IMPORTANT	VERY IMPORTANT	
1. The college was not a friendly place.	☐	☐	☐	☐	21
2. The teaching areas were not suitable for adults.	☐	☐	☐	☐	22
3. The college lacked leisure activities.	☐	☐	☐	☐	23
4. Student services were unsatisfactory.	☐	☐	☐	☐	24
a) canteen	☐	☐	☐	☐	25
b) library	☐	☐	☐	☐	26
c) computer centre	☐	☐	☐	☐	27
d) workshops	☐	☐	☐	☐	28
e) child care facilities	☐	☐	☐	☐	29
f) recreational areas.	☐	☐	☐	☐	30
5. The college felt unsafe at night.	☐	☐	☐	☐	31
6. The college rules, (e.g. about opening hours) were too inflexible.	☐	☐	☐	☐	32
7. The college class timetable allowed no flexibility.	☐	☐	☐	☐	33
8. Other (please specify)	☐	☐	☐	☐	
1.....	☐	☐	☐	☐	
2.....	☐	☐	☐	☐	

PLEASE PROCEED TO FACTOR 4

4. DISTANCE/REMOTENESS (ISOLATION) /TRAVEL

For example, did

- . travel become too demanding?
- . remoteness isolate you from the college?
- . travelling-time consume your study time?

I assess this factor in my decision to withdraw, as:
(Please tick one box)

- A. DON'T KNOW/NOT APPLICABLE ☐ } Go to next factor
 B. NOT IMPORTANT ☐ }
 C. IMPORTANT ☐ } Complete the items below,
 D. VERY IMPORTANT ☐ } then go to the next factor

34

NOTE: DON'T KNOW/NOT APPLICABLE

To fill in any box under this column, you should clearly "NOT KNOW" THE ANSWER or clearly see the item as "NOT APPLICABLE" e.g. any question on PREGNANCY may NOT BE APPLICABLE to males.

1. Regular travel to college after work became too demanding.
2. Time spent in travel reduced too greatly my time for study.
3. I felt unsafe using public transport at night.
4. Travelling to college took the time I needed for personal interests.
5. Time spent in travelling strained family relationships.
6. Remoteness created too many problems in getting college assignments.
7. Remoteness prevented adequate contact with the college/s.
8. Remoteness from the college prevented me from getting the necessary practical training.
9. Other (please specify)
- 1.....
- 2.....

	DON'T KNOW/NOT APPLICABLE	NOT IMPORTANT	IMPORTANT	VERY IMPORTANT
1. Regular travel to college after work became too demanding.	☐	☐	☐	☐
2. Time spent in travel reduced too greatly my time for study.	☐	☐	☐	☐
3. I felt unsafe using public transport at night.	☐	☐	☐	☐
4. Travelling to college took the time I needed for personal interests.	☐	☐	☐	☐
5. Time spent in travelling strained family relationships.	☐	☐	☐	☐
6. Remoteness created too many problems in getting college assignments.	☐	☐	☐	☐
7. Remoteness prevented adequate contact with the college/s.	☐	☐	☐	☐
8. Remoteness from the college prevented me from getting the necessary practical training.	☐	☐	☐	☐
9. Other (please specify)	☐	☐	☐	☐
1.....	☐	☐	☐	☐
2.....	☐	☐	☐	☐

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PLEASE PROCEED TO FACTOR 5

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5. HUMAN RELATIONSHIP MATTERS

For example, did your study cause tensions between you and

- . your wife
- . your flat-mate?
- . your boss?

I assess this factor in my decision to withdraw, as:
(Please tick one box)

- | | | |
|------------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| A. DON'T KNOW/NOT APPLICABLE | ☐ | } Go to next factor |
| B. NOT IMPORTANT | ☐ | |
| C. IMPORTANT | ☐ | } Complete the items below,
then go to the next factor |
| D. VERY IMPORTANT | ☐ | |

NOTE: DON'T KNOW/NOT APPLICABLE

To fill in any box under this column, you should clearly "NOT KNOW" THE ANSWER or clearly see the item as "NOT APPLICABLE" e.g. any question on PREGNANCY may NOT BE APPLICABLE to males.

HUMAN RELATIONSHIP MATTERS

	DON'T KNOW/NOT APPLICABLE	NOT IMPORTANT	IMPORTANT	VERY IMPORTANT	
1. Too much pressure was put on me to study by those I lived with.	☐	☐	☐	☐	45
2. Those living with me had no feeling for the demands my course made on me.	☐	☐	☐	☐	46
3. My studies created too many tensions between my wife and me.	☐	☐	☐	☐	47
4. My studies caused ill-feeling between my flat-mate and me.	☐	☐	☐	☐	48
5. My studies created personal differences between my employer and me.	☐	☐	☐	☐	49
6. My studies created conflicts with my family.	☐	☐	☐	☐	50
7. Other (please specify)					
1.....	☐	☐	☐	☐	51
2.....					

PLEASE PROCEED TO FACTOR 6

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44

6. PRACTICAL MATTERS (related to HOME/PERSONAL COMMITMENTS)

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For example, did you

- . miss sports training too often?
- . have a baby?
- . find the tasks at home impossible?

I assess this factor in my decision to withdraw, as:
(Please tick one box)

- A. DON'T KNOW/NOT APPLICABLE ☐ } Go to next factor
 B. NOT IMPORTANT ☐ }
 C. IMPORTANT ☐ } Complete the items below,
 D. VERY IMPORTANT ☐ } then go to the next factor

52

NOTE: DON'T KNOW/NOT APPLICABLE

To fill in any box under this column, you should clearly "NOT KNOW" THE ANSWER or clearly see the item as "NOT APPLICABLE" e.g. any question on PREGNANCY may NOT BE APPLICABLE to males.

	DON'T KNOW/NOT APPLICABLE	NOT IMPORTANT	IMPORTANT	VERY IMPORTANT
1. My home didn't have suitable study facilities.	☐	☐	☐	☐
2. Home jobs made study impossible.	☐	☐	☐	☐
3. Single parent responsibilities prevented me from studying.	☐	☐	☐	☐
4. I had too much difficulty meeting family commitments and study.	☐	☐	☐	☐
5. The birth of my child caused me to terminate studies.	☐	☐	☐	☐
6. The mix of home, work and study proved too much.	☐	☐	☐	☐
7. I withdrew to look after a sick relative or friend.	☐	☐	☐	☐
8. Study prevented me from taking part in my social/sporting interests.	☐	☐	☐	☐
9. Other (please specify)	☐	☐	☐	☐
1.....	☐	☐	☐	☐
2.....	☐	☐	☐	☐

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PLEASE PROCEED TO FACTOR 7

7. PERSONAL MATTERS

For example, did

- . loneliness distress you?
- . you choose for a new life style?

I assess this factor in my decision to withdraw, as:
(Please tick one box)

- | | | | |
|------------------------------|--------------------------|---|---|
| A. DON'T KNOW/NOT APPLICABLE | ☐ | } | Go to next factor |
| B. NOT IMPORTANT | ☐ | | |
| C. IMPORTANT | ☐ | } | Complete the items below,
then go to the next factor |
| D. VERY IMPORTANT | ☐ | | |

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62

NOTE: DON'T KNOW/NOT APPLICABLE

To fill in any box under this column, you should clearly "NOT KNOW" THE ANSWER or clearly see the item as "NOT APPLICABLE" e.g. any question on PREGNANCY may NOT BE APPLICABLE to males.

1. Living by myself caused me to loose interest in study.
2. I didn't like being a part-time student.
3. I opted for a new life style. Study wasn't a part.
4. A close personal friend withdrew so I did too.
5. I realised study wasn't for me.
6. Other (please specify)

1.....

2.....

	DON'T KNOW/NOT APPLICABLE	NOT IMPORTANT	IMPORTANT	VERY IMPORTANT
1. Living by myself caused me to loose interest in study.	☐	☐	☐	☐
2. I didn't like being a part-time student.	☐	☐	☐	☐
3. I opted for a new life style. Study wasn't a part.	☐	☐	☐	☐
4. A close personal friend withdrew so I did too.	☐	☐	☐	☐
5. I realised study wasn't for me.	☐	☐	☐	☐
6. Other (please specify)	☐	☐	☐	☐
1.....	☐	☐	☐	☐
2.....	☐	☐	☐	☐

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PLEASE PROCEED TO FACTOR 8

8. ACADEMIC PREPAREDNESS

For example, did you

- . lack study skills?
- . lack background knowledge?
- . lack command of English?

I assess this factor in my decision to withdraw, as:
(Please tick one box)

- A. DON'T KNOW/NOT APPLICABLE ☐ { Go to next factor
B. NOT IMPORTANT ☐ {
C. IMPORTANT ☐ { Complete the items below,
D. VERY IMPORTANT ☐ { then go to the next factor

NOTE: DON'T KNOW/NOT APPLICABLE

To fill in any box under this column, you should clearly "NOT KNOW" THE ANSWER or clearly see the item as "NOT APPLICABLE" e.g. any question on PREGNANCY may NOT BE APPLICABLE to males.

1. My study skills (e.g. learning and note taking methods) were not adequate.
2. I had difficulties organising my study time.
3. I had difficulties establishing a study routine.
4. I lacked the necessary background knowledge and skills to cope with the course.
5. My command of English was inadequate.
6. I should have done a preparatory course.
7. Other (please specify)
- 1.....
- 2.....

DON'T KNOW/NOT APPLICABLE	NOT IMPORTANT	IMPORTANT	VERY IMPORTANT
☐	☐	☐	☐
☐	☐	☐	☐
☐	☐	☐	☐
☐	☐	☐	☐
☐	☐	☐	☐
☐	☐	☐	☐
☐	☐	☐	☐
☐	☐	☐	☐

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PLEASE PROCEED TO FACTOR 9

9. HEALTH

Read below.

I assess this factor in my decision to withdraw, as:
(Please tick one box)

- A. DON'T KNOW/NOT APPLICABLE ☐ }
 B. NOT IMPORTANT ☐ } Go to next factor
 C. IMPORTANT ☐ }
 D. VERY IMPORTANT ☐ } Complete the items below,
 then go to the next factor

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3rd
Card

1

NOTE: DON'T KNOW/NOT APPLICABLE

To fill in any box under this column, you should clearly "NOT KNOW" THE ANSWER or clearly see the item as "NOT APPLICABLE" e.g. any question on PREGNANCY may NOT BE APPLICABLE to males.

1. I became physically ill.
2. An existing health problem worsened.
3. My mental health suffered.
4. Other (please specify)

1.....

2.....

DON'T KNOW/NOT APPLICABLE

NOT IMPORTANT

IMPORTANT

VERY IMPORTANT

☐
☐
☐
☐
☐
☐
☐
☐
☐
☐
☐
☐
☐
☐
☐
☐

2

3

4

5

PLEASE PROCEED TO FACTOR 10

10. WORK RELATED DECISIONS

For example, did you

- . get a job?
- . get transferred?
- . get too much overtime?
- . lose your job?

I assess this factor in my decision to withdraw, as:
(Please tick one box)

- A. DON'T KNOW/NOT APPLICABLE ☐ {
 B. NOT IMPORTANT ☐ { Go to next factor
 C. IMPORTANT ☐ { Complete the items below,
 D. VERY IMPORTANT ☐ { then go to the next factor

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6

NOTE: DON'T KNOW/NOT APPLICABLE

To fill in any box under this column, you should clearly "NOT KNOW" THE ANSWER or clearly see the item as "NOT APPLICABLE" e.g. any question on PREGNANCY may NOT BE APPLICABLE to males.

	DON'T KNOW/NOT APPLICABLE	NOT IMPORTANT	IMPORTANT	VERY IMPORTANT	
1. I got a job, which made completing the course unnecessary.	☐	☐	☐	☐	7
2. I got a job, which prevented me from continuing part-time study.	☐	☐	☐	☐	8
3. I was promoted in my job, which forced me to withdraw from study.	☐	☐	☐	☐	9
4. A job transfer forced me to withdraw.	☐	☐	☐	☐	10
5. My career plans changed making my studies irrelevant.	☐	☐	☐	☐	11
6. Overtime forced me to leave the course.	☐	☐	☐	☐	12
7. Changes in industrial legislation made completing the course unnecessary.	☐	☐	☐	☐	13
8. Changes in college lecture times clashed with work times	☐	☐	☐	☐	14
9. I lost the job motivating me to study.	☐	☐	☐	☐	15
10. There were no job opportunities stemming from my course.	☐	☐	☐	☐	16
11. I couldn't cope with work and study.	☐	☐	☐	☐	17
12. Other (please specify)	☐	☐	☐	☐	
1.....	☐	☐	☐	☐	18
2.....	☐	☐	☐	☐	

PLEASE PROCEED TO FACTOR 11

11. FINANCE

For example, were

- . general course costs too high?
- . the costs of child care prohibitive?

Did your normal income cease?

I assess this factor in my decision to withdraw, as:
(Please tick one box)

- | | | |
|------------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| A. DON'T KNOW/NOT APPLICABLE | ☐ | } Go to next factor |
| B. NOT IMPORTANT | ☐ | |
| C. IMPORTANT | ☐ | } Complete the items below,
then go to the next factor |
| D. VERY IMPORTANT | ☐ | |

19

NOTE: DON'T KNOW/NOT APPLICABLE

To fill in any box under this column, you should clearly "NOT KNOW" THE ANSWER or clearly see the item as "NOT APPLICABLE" e.g. any question on PREGNANCY may NOT BE APPLICABLE to males.

	DON'T KNOW/NOT APPLICABLE	NOT IMPORTANT	IMPORTANT	VERY IMPORTANT	
1. I couldn't meet the cost of travel to classes in addition to living costs.	☐	☐	☐	☐	20
2. I couldn't meet course costs in addition to living costs.	☐	☐	☐	☐	21
3. The cost of child care was too great.	☐	☐	☐	☐	22
4. I lost my income after I enrolled.	☐	☐	☐	☐	23
5. I lost the financial support of my spouse/partner.	☐	☐	☐	☐	24
6. My parents no longer supported me financially.	☐	☐	☐	☐	25
7. My employer withdrew a training allowance.	☐	☐	☐	☐	26
8. The financial demands of the family forced me to withdraw.	☐	☐	☐	☐	27
9. Other (please specify)					
1.....	☐	☐	☐	☐	28
2.....					

PLEASE PROCEED TO FACTOR 12

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12. UNEXPECTED EVENTS

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Please specify and describe briefly any unexpected event/s,
not covered in the previous pages, which caused you to
withdraw.

I assess this factor in my decision to withdraw, as:
(Please tick one box)

- A. DON'T KNOW/NOT APPLICABLE ☐ } Go to the last page
B. NOT IMPORTANT ☐ }
- C. IMPORTANT ☐ } Complete the factor below,
D. VERY IMPORTANT ☐ } then go to the last page

29

NOTE: DON'T KNOW/NOT APPLICABLE

To fill in any box under this
column, you should clearly "NOT
KNOW" THE ANSWER or clearly see
the item as "NOT APPLICABLE"
e.g. any question on PREGNANCY
may NOT BE APPLICABLE to males.

1.
.....
.....
.....

2.
.....
.....
.....

DON'T KNOW/NOT APPLICABLE	NOT IMPORTANT	IMPORTANT	VERY IMPORTANT
☐	☐	☐	☐
☐	☐	☐	☐

30

31

Last
Page
32

33

THANK YOU, PLEASE PROCEED TO THE LAST PAGE

We know that questionnaires are limiting and don't allow you to tell the full story.

If you would like to give us more details, please complete the space below

We would like to arrange a short interview with some of those who answered this questionnaire. If you are willing to be interviewed please provide details below:

ADDRESS:

.....

.....

TELEPHONE NUMBER: Day:

Evening:

THANK YOU, YOU ARE NOW FINISHED

PLEASE RETURN THE QUESTIONNAIRE IN THE ENVELOPE PROVIDED

A SURVEY OF PART-TIME STUDENTS WHO ARE FIRST YEAR WITHDRAWERS FROM TAFE CERTIFICATE COURSES, 1986

THE QUESTIONNAIRE

According to TAFE records in 1986 you started, part-time a TAFE Certificate course or the equivalent and have now left that course.

There are many reasons for doing so.

Which of the following best describes your reason for leaving.
(Please circle one number.)

- I discontinued studies.....1
- I changed to full-time in the same course in 1986.....2
- I changed to full-time in another course in 1986.....3
- I changed to part-time in another course in 1986.....4

If you circled 2, 3 or 4, PLEASE PUT THE QUESTIONNAIRE in the pre-paid, addressed envelope and post it.

If you circled 1, PLEASE COMPLETE THE QUESTIONNAIRE by

1. Filling in details on pages 1 to 5
2. Reading carefully the details on page 6 before proceeding beyond it.

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CASE 1- 4

SURVEY 1 5

1. Personal details

(Please complete by filling in the details or ticking the appropriate box)

A. NAME: B. HOME ADDRESS:

.....

--	--	--	--

POST CODE

6- 9

Telephone: STD Code: Number:

C. SEXFemale ☐: Male ☐

10

D. HOME STATUS (Tick one box only)

Living with

1) partner and family ☐2) partner ☐3) parents ☐4) alone ☐5) friend/s ☐Other (please specify) ☐

.....

11

E. AGE (Tick one box only)1) Under 17 Years ☐2) 17 - 20 ☐3) 21 - 30 ☐4) Over 30 ☐

12

F. HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION COMPLETED (Tick one box only)1) Year 9 or less ☐2) Year 10 or 11 ☐3) Matriculation or Year 12 ☐4) Post Secondary Certificate 216 ☐5) Degree or Diploma ☐

13

G. COUNTRY OF BIRTH and USE OF LANGUAGE(Tick one box on each line)

YES NO

- | | | | |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|----|
| 1) . Is your country of birth Australia? | ☐ | ☐ | 14 |
| . Do you have migrant status? | ☐ | ☐ | 15 |
| . Is English your first (or equally first) language? | ☐ | ☐ | 16 |
| . Do you regularly speak any language other than English? | ☐ | ☐ | 17 |

2) Your ability with English? (Tick one box on each line)

- | | | | | | | | |
|--------------|------|--------------------------|---------|--------------------------|------|--------------------------|----|
| a) SPEAKING: | Good | ☐ | Average | ☐ | Poor | ☐ | 18 |
| b) WRITING: | Good | ☐ | Average | ☐ | Poor | ☐ | 19 |
| c) READING: | Good | ☐ | Average | ☐ | Poor | ☐ | 20 |

2. Your daily work

A. If you are employed, briefly describe your job.

1) TITLE:

21-22

2) BRIEF DESCRIPTION:

.....

.....

.....

.....

B. If not, are you

(Tick one box on each line)

YES NO

- | | | | |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|----|
| 1) unemployed and registered with the C.E.S.? | ☐ | ☐ | 23 |
| 2) unemployed and not registered with the C.E.S. (Commonwealth Employment Service)? | ☐ | ☐ | 24 |
| 3) full-time home duties? | ☐ | ☐ | 25 |
| 4) engaged in voluntary community service | | | |
| . full-time? | ☐ | ☐ | 26 |
| . part-time? | ☐ | ☐ | 27 |

appropriate box)

A. Name of your course

ONLY

28-29

.....

B. The number of course subjects enrolled in

30

C. The number of colleges you attended in doing the subjects.

31

D. Your form of study (please tick one box only)

1) College attendance

☐

2) External studies (correspondence)

☐

3) Part college attendance and part external studies

☐

32

Your reason/s for enrolling

Please show how important each of the following was in your decision to enrol. (Please tick each item appropriately)

NOTE: DON'T KNOW/NOT APPLICABLE

To fill in any box under this column, you should clearly "NOT KNOW" THE ANSWER or clearly see the item as "NOT APPLICABLE" e.g. any question on PREGNANCY may NOT BE APPLICABLE to males.

DON'T KNOW/NOT APPLICABLE

NOT IMPORTANT

IMPORTANT

VERY IMPORTANT

1. To please a relative or friend
2. To help me in my job
3. To obtain training for a specific job
4. To widen career options
5. To assist entry to another course/s
6. To gain a tertiary qualification
7. To satisfy an interest
8. To fill in time until I decided what to do
9. To obtain personal satisfaction
10. Other (please specify)

1.....

218

33

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How important was each of the following to you in knowing about your course? (Please tick each item appropriately)

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NOTE: DON'T KNOW/NOT APPLICABLE

To fill in any box under this column, you should clearly "NOT KNOW" THE ANSWER or clearly see the item as "NOT APPLICABLE" e.g. any question on PREGNANCY may NOT BE APPLICABLE to males.

A. MEDIA (course existence)

1) Newspapers

. Major daily newspapers

. Sunday papers

. Regional or municipal papers

2) Television

. Advertising/publicity/news

B. TAFE (course existence/content)

1) TAFE information services or publicity

2) TAFE career/vocational counselling

3) TAFE Teaching staff

4) Former or current TAFE student/s

5) Your own experiences in TAFE

C. OTHER AGENCY (course existence/content)

1) School careers advisers or staff

2) Government career services

3) Other Commonwealth or State government department/s

D. (course existence/content)

1) Parent(s)/relative

2) Local learning centre

3) Someone at work

4) Friend/s

E. Other (please specify)

219

43

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Enrolling

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A. About how long was it between when you enrolled and when you started the course? (Tick one box only)

1 - 6 days ☐: 1 - 4 weeks ☐: 1 - 4 mths ☐
4 - 8 mths ☐: 8 - 12 mths ☐: More ☐

60

B. Were you informed on the following matters by College Staff? (Please tick each appropriate box)

1) Costs

YES ☐ NO ☐

61

2) Your obligations to attending classes

☐ ☐

62

3) Your obligations to completing course assignments

☐ ☐

63

4) Your obligations to regular study

☐ ☐

64

5) The resources and services the college provided to help you to

. complete your studies successfully

☐ ☐

65

. know where to seek advice,

☐ ☐

66

e.g. counselling

☐ ☐

67

. feel at ease in the college

Withdrawing

A. Did you advise the college of your intention to withdraw? (Tick one box)

YES ☐ NO ☐

68

B. Did college staff help you in making your decision (Tick one box)

☐ ☐

69

C. Did anyone from the college staff later (Tick one box on each line)

1) contact you about your withdrawal?

☐ ☐

70

2) help you with any problems you were having?

☐ ☐

71

3) encourage you to continue your studies?

☐ ☐

72

THE FOLLOWING PAGES ARE MOST IMPORTANT

They cover 12 factors, one or more of which may have been important in your decision to withdraw.

Please read carefully the title on each page and the few points immediately beneath it and assess the factor's importance in your decision to withdraw.

1. If you can't make a decision about the factor, that is, you DON'T KNOW, or recognise the factor as "NOT APPLICABLE",

GO STRAIGHT TO THE NEXT FACTOR

OR

If you assess the factor as "NOT IMPORTANT",

GO STRAIGHT TO THE NEXT FACTOR

2. If you assess the factor as IMPORTANT or VERY IMPORTANT, complete the items below the factor, then go to the next factor.

ACHIEVEMENT OF STUDY OBJECTIVE

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For example, did the study you had completed get you

- a job?
- a pay increase?
- entry to another course?
- relief from boredom?

I assess this factor in my decision to withdraw, as:
(Please tick one box)

- | | | |
|------------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| A. DON'T KNOW/NOT APPLICABLE | ☐ | } Go straight to next page |
| B. NOT IMPORTANT | ☐ | |
| C. IMPORTANT | ☐ | } Complete the items below,
then go to the next page |
| D. VERY IMPORTANT | ☐ | |

73

NOTE: DON'T KNOW/NOT APPLICABLE

To fill in any box under this column, you should clearly "NOT KNOW" THE ANSWER or clearly see the item as "NOT APPLICABLE" e.g. any question on PREGNANCY may NOT BE APPLICABLE to males.

The part of the course completed enabled me to:

1. get a job.
2. meet the needs of my employer.
3. get the skill/knowledge I needed for promotion.
4. get an increase in pay.
5. gain entry to another course.
6. broaden my career options.
7. keep studying while I determined what I wanted to do.
8. get enough training for my present job.
9. Other (please specify)

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222

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COURSE (GENERAL and TEACHING)

For example, did you find the course

- . not what you expected?
- . too difficult?

or that teaching

- . methods lacked interest?
- . staff were not interested in you?
- . aids were not appropriate?

I assess this factor in my decision to withdraw, as:
(Please tick one box)

- | | | |
|------------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| A. DON'T KNOW/NOT APPLICABLE | ☐ | } Go straight to page <u>10</u> |
| B. NOT IMPORTANT | ☐ | |
| C. IMPORTANT | ☐ | } Complete the items below,
then go to page <u>9</u> |
| D. VERY IMPORTANT | ☐ | |

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3

NOTE: DON'T KNOW/NOT APPLICABLE

To fill in any box under this column, you should clearly "NOT KNOW" THE ANSWER or clearly see the item as "NOT APPLICABLE" e.g. any question on PREGNANCY may NOT BE APPLICABLE to males.

	DON'T KNOW/NOT APPLICABLE	NOT IMPORTANT	IMPORTANT	VERY IMPORTANT
1. I didn't find the course interesting.	☐	☐	☐	☐
2. The course didn't do what its publicity claimed.	☐	☐	☐	☐
3. The course was badly organised.	☐	☐	☐	☐
4. I found the course too difficult.	☐	☐	☐	☐
5. I believed I would fail.	☐	☐	☐	☐
6. The course was of date.	☐	☐	☐	☐
7. Other (please specify)	☐	☐	☐	☐

The course didn't meet my needs because:

1. I didn't find the course interesting.
2. The course didn't do what its publicity claimed.
3. The course was badly organised.
4. I found the course too difficult.
5. I believed I would fail.
6. The course was of date.
7. Other (please specify)

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2. COURSE (GENERAL and TEACHING) (CONTINUED)

2 B. TEACHING AND LEARNING

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NOTE: DON'T KNOW/NOT APPLICABLE

To fill in any box under this column, you should clearly "NOT KNOW" THE ANSWER or clearly see the item as "NOT APPLICABLE" e.g. any question on PREGNANCY may NOT BE APPLICABLE to males.

	DON'T KNOW/NOT APPLICABLE	NOT IMPORTANT	IMPORTANT	VERY IMPORTANT	
1. Teaching staff seemed disorganised.	☐	☐	☐	☐	11
2. Teaching staff didn't have sufficient knowledge of content.	☐	☐	☐	☐	12
3. Teaching methods did not stimulate my interest.	☐	☐	☐	☐	13
4. Teaching was not backed up by appropriate aids (Films, handouts, etc.).	☐	☐	☐	☐	14
5. Teaching staff were difficult to contact.	☐	☐	☐	☐	15
6. Teaching staff seemed disinterested in me.	☐	☐	☐	☐	16
7. Personal contact with my lecturer(s)/teacher(s) was unsatisfactory.	☐	☐	☐	☐	17
8. No opportunity existed to combine class teaching with correspondence or self-study programmes.	☐	☐	☐	☐	18
9. Other (please specify)	☐	☐	☐	☐	19
1.....	☐	☐	☐	☐	
2.....	☐	☐	☐	☐	

B. TEACHING and LEARNING

NOTE: DON'T KNOW/NOT APPLICABLE

To fill in any box under this column, you should clearly "NOT KNOW" THE ANSWER or clearly see the item as "NOT APPLICABLE"

My desire to persist was reduced at some stage during the year because

1. teaching staff seemed disorganised.
2. teaching staff seemed not to have sufficient knowledge of course content
3. teaching methods did not stimulate my interest.
4. teaching was not backed up by appropriate aids (films, handouts, etc.)
5. teaching staff were difficult to contact.
6. teaching staff seemed disinterested in me.
7. personal contact with my lecturer(s)/teacher(s) was unsatisfactory.
8. no opportunity existed to combine class teaching with correspondence or self-study programmes.
9. Other (please specify)

1

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COLLEGE/COLLEGES

USE
ONLY

For example, did you find at some stage, the college

- impersonal?
- lacked student facilities?
- rules inflexible?
- felt unsafe at night?

I assess this factor in reducing my desire to persist as:
(Please tick one box)

- A. DON'T KNOW/NOT APPLICABLE ☐ {
B. NOT IMPORTANT ☐ } Go straight to next page
- C. IMPORTANT ☐ {
D. VERY IMPORTANT ☐ } Complete the items below,
then go to the next page

20

NOTE: DON'T KNOW/NOT APPLICABLE

To fill in any box under this column, you should clearly "NOT KNOW" THE ANSWER or clearly see the item as "NOT APPLICABLE"

My desire to persist was reduced at some stage during the year because

- the college was not a friendly place.
- the teaching areas were not suitable for adults.
- the college lacked leisure activities.
- student services were unsatisfactory.
 - canteen
 - library
 - computer centre
 - workshops
 - child care facilities
 - recreational areas.
- the college felt unsafe at night.
- the college rules, (e.g. about opening hours) were too inflexible.
- the college class timetable allowed no flexibility.
- Other (please specify)

1
2

DISTANCE/RE MOTENESS (ISOLATION)/TRAVEL

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ONLY

For example, did you find at some stage that

- . travel became too demanding?
- . remoteness isolated you from the college?
- travelling-time consumed your study time?

I assess this factor in reducing my desire to persist as:
(Please tick one box)

- A. DON'T KNOW/NOT APPLICABLE ☐ {
B. NOT IMPORTANT ☐ { Go straight to next page
- C. IMPORTANT ☐ {
D. VERY IMPORTANT ☐ { Complete the items below,
then go to the next page

34

NOTE: DON'T KNOW/NOT APPLICABLE

To fill in any box under this column, you should clearly "NOT KNOW" THE ANSWER or clearly see the item as "NOT APPLICABLE"

desire to persist was reduced at some stage
during the year because

- regular travel to college after work became too demanding.
- time spent in travel reduced too greatly my time for study.
- I felt unsafe using public transport at night.
- travelling to college took the time I needed for personal interests.
- time spent in travelling strained family relationships.
- remoteness created too many problems in getting college assignments.
- remoteness prevented adequate contact with the college/s.
- remoteness from the college prevented me from getting the necessary practical training.
- Other (please specify)

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5. HUMAN RELATIONSHIP MATTERS

For example, did you find at some stage your study caused tensions between you and

- . your partner
- . your flat-mate?
- . your boss?

I assess this factor in reducing my desire to persist as:
(Please tick one box)

A. DON'T KNOW/NOT APPLICABLE ☐

B. NOT IMPORTANT ☐

C. IMPORTANT ☐

D. VERY IMPORTANT ☐



Go straight to next page



Complete the items below
then go to the next page

USE
ONLY

44

NOTE: DON'T KNOW/NOT APPLICABLE

To fill in any box under this column, you should clearly "NOT KNOW" THE ANSWER or clearly see the item as "NOT APPLICABLE"

My desire to persist was reduced at some stage during the year because

1. too much pressure was put on me to study by those I lived with.
2. those living with me had no feeling for the demands my course made on me.
3. my studies caused ill-feeling between my flat-mate and me.
4. My studies caused ill-feeling between my flat-mate and me.
5. my studies created personal differences between my employer and me.
6. my studies created conflicts with my family.
7. Other (please specify)

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6. PRACTICAL MATTERS (related to HOME/PERSONAL COMMITMENTS)

For example, did you find that at some stage that you were

- . missing sports training too often?
- . having a baby?
- . finding the tasks at home impossible?

I assess this factor in reducing my desire to persist as:
(Please tick one box)

- A. DON'T KNOW/NOT APPLICABLE ☐ } Go straight to next page
 B NOT IMPORTANT ☐ }
 C. IMPORTANT ☐ } Complete the items below
 D. VERY IMPORTANT ☐ } then go to the next page

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52

NOTE: DON'T KNOW/NOT APPLICABLE

To fill in any box under this column, you should clearly "NOT KNOW" THE ANSWER or clearly see the item as "NOT APPLICABLE"

My desire to persist was reduced at some stage during the year because

1. my home didn't have suitable study facilities.
2. home jobs made study impossible.
3. single parent responsibilities prevented me from studying.
4. I had too much difficulty meeting family commitments and study.
5. Pregnancy or birth of my child caused me to miss studies for a while.
6. the mix of home, work and study proved too much.
7. I had to miss studies for a while to look after a sick relative or friend.
8. study prevented me from taking part in my social/sporting interests.
9. Other (please specify)

1 229

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7. PERSONAL MATTERS

For example, did you at some stage

- . find loneliness distressed you?
- . chose a new life style?

I assess this factor in reducing my desire to persist as:
(Please tick one box)

- | | | |
|------------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| A. DON'T KNOW/NOT APPLICABLE | ☐ | } Go straight to next page |
| B. NOT IMPORTANT | ☐ | |
| C. IMPORTANT | ☐ | } Complete the items below,
then go to the next page |
| D. VERY IMPORTANT | ☐ | |

62

NOTE: DON'T KNOW/NOT APPLICABLE

To fill in any box under this column, you should clearly "NOT KNOW" THE ANSWER or clearly see the item as "NOT APPLICABLE"

My desire to persist was reduced at some stage during the year because

1. living by myself caused me to lose interest in study.
2. I didn't like being a part-time student.
3. I chose a new life style of which study wasn't really a part.
4. a close personal friend withdrew so I was tempted to do so too.
5. I began to think study wasn't for me.
6. Other (please specify)

1

2

8. ACADEMIC PREPAREDNESS

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For example, did you find at some state

- . you lacked study skills?
- . you lacked background knowledge?
- . you lacked an adequate command of the English language?

I assess this factor in reducing my desire to persist as:
(Please tick one box)

- A. DON'T KNOW/NOT APPLICABLE ☐ {
 B. NOT IMPORTANT ☐ Go straight to next page
 C. IMPORTANT ☐ { Complete the items below,
 D. VERY IMPORTANT ☐ then go to the next page

69

NOTE: DON'T KNOW/NOT APPLICABLE

To fill in any box under this column, you should clearly "NOT KNOW" THE ANSWER or clearly see the item as "NOT APPLICABLE"

	DON'T KNOW/NOT APPLICABLE	NOT IMPORTANT	IMPORTANT	VERY IMPORTANT	
1. my study skills (e.g. learning and note taking methods) were not adequate.	☐	☐	☐	☐	70
2. I had difficulties organising my study time.	☐	☐	☐	☐	71
3. I had difficulties establishing a study routine.	☐	☐	☐	☐	72
4. I lacked the necessary background knowledge and skills to cope with the course.	☐	☐	☐	☐	73
5. my command of English was inadequate.	☐	☐	☐	☐	74
6. I should have done a preparatory course.	☐	☐	☐	☐	75
7. Other (please specify)	☐	☐	☐	☐	
1	☐	☐	☐	☐	76
2	☐	☐	☐	☐	

9. HEALTH

For example, did you find at some stage that

- . you became physically ill
- . your mental health suffered

I assess this factor in reducing my desire to persist as:
(Please tick one box)

- A. DON'T KNOW/NOT APPLICABLE ☐ {
 B. NOT IMPORTANT ☐ } Go straight to next page
 C. IMPORTANT ☐ { Complete the items below,
 C. VERY IMPORTANT ☐ } then go to the next page

NOTE: DON'T KNOW/NOT APPLICABLE

To fill in any box under this column, you should clearly "NOT KNOW" THE ANSWER or clearly see the item as "NOT APPLICABLE"

My desire to persist was reduced at some stage during the year because

1. I became physically ill/had an accident
2. An existing health problem worsened.
3. My mental health suffered.
4. Other (please specify)

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10. WORK RELATED DECISIONS

For example, did you find at some stage that you

- . got a new job?
- . got a transfer?
- . got too much overtime?
- . lost your job?

I assess this factor in reducing my desire to persist as:
(Please tick one box)

- A. DON'T KNOW/NOT APPLICABLE ☐ }
 B. NOT IMPORTANT ☐ } Go straight to next page
- C. IMPORTANT ☐ }
 D. VERY IMPORTANT ☐ } Complete the items below,
 then go to the next page

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6

NOTE: DON'T KNOW/NOT APPLICABLE

To fill in any box under this column, you should clearly "NOT KNOW" THE ANSWER or clearly see the item as "NOT APPLICABLE"

My desire to persist was reduced at some stage during the year because

1. I got a job, which made completing the course unnecessary.
2. I got a job, which almost prevented me from continuing part-time study.
3. I was promoted in my job, which almost forced me to withdraw from study.
4. a job transfer almost forced me to withdraw.
5. my career plans changed making my studies almost irrelevant.
6. overtime almost forced me to leave the course.
7. changes in industrial legislation made completing the course unnecessary.
8. changes in college lecture times clashed with work times
9. I lost the job motivating me to study.
10. there were no job opportunities stemming from my course.
11. I almost couldn't cope with work and study.
12. Other (please specify)

233

1

DON'T KNOW/NOT APPLICABLE	NOT IMPORTANT	IMPORTANT	VERY IMPORTANT
☐	☐	☐	☐
☐	☐	☐	☐
☐	☐	☐	☐
☐	☐	☐	☐
☐	☐	☐	☐
☐	☐	☐	☐
☐	☐	☐	☐
☐	☐	☐	☐
☐	☐	☐	☐
☐	☐	☐	☐
☐	☐	☐	☐
☐	☐	☐	☐
☐	☐	☐	☐
☐	☐	☐	☐
☐	☐	☐	☐
☐	☐	☐	☐

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11. FINANCE

For example, did you find at some stage that

- . general course costs were too high?
- . the costs of child care were prohibitive?
- . your normal income ceased?

I assess this factor in reducing my desire to persist as:
(Please tick one box)

- A. DON'T KNOW/NOT APPLICABLE ☐ }
 B. NOT IMPORTANT ☐ } Go straight to next page
 C. IMPORTANT ☐ } Complete the items below,
 D. VERY IMPORTANT ☐ } then go to the next page

19

NOTE: DON'T KNOW/NOT APPLICABLE

To fill in any box under this column, you should clearly "NOT KNOW" THE ANSWER or clearly see the item as "NOT APPLICABLE"

	DON'T KNOW/NOT APPLICABLE	NOT IMPORTANT	IMPORTANT	VERY IMPORTANT	
1. I couldn't meet the cost of travel to classes in addition to living costs.	☐	☐	☐	☐	20
2. I couldn't meet course costs in addition to living costs.	☐	☐	☐	☐	21
3. the cost of child care was too great.	☐	☐	☐	☐	22
4. I lost my income after I enrolled.	☐	☐	☐	☐	23
5. I lost the financial support of my partner.	☐	☐	☐	☐	24
6. my parents no longer supported me financially.	☐	☐	☐	☐	25
7. my employer withdrew a training allowance.	☐	☐	☐	☐	26
8. the financial demands of my family almost forced me to withdraw.	☐	☐	☐	☐	27
9. Other (please specify)	☐	☐	☐	☐	
1	☐	☐	☐	☐	28
2					

12. UNEXPECTED EVENTS

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ONLY

Please specify and describe briefly, any unexpected event/s not covered in the previous pages, which reduced your desire to persist

I assess this factor in reducing my desire to persist as:
(Please tick one box)

- A. DON'T KNOW/NOT APPLICABLE ☐ {
B. NOT IMPORTANT ☐ { Go straight to next page

C. IMPORTANT ☐ { Complete the items below,
D. VERY IMPORTANT ☐ { then go to the next page

29

NOTE: DON'T KNOW/NOT APPLICABLE

To fill in any box under this column, you should clearly "NOT KNOW" THE ANSWER or clearly see the item as "NOT APPLICABLE"

My desire to persist was reduced at some stage during the year because

1.
.....
.....
.....

2.
.....
.....
.....

DON'T KNOW/NOT APPLICABLE	NOT IMPORTANT	IMPORTANT	VERY IMPORTANT
☐	☐	☐	☐
☐	☐	☐	☐

30

31

We know that questionnaires are limiting and don't allow you to tell the full story.

If you would like to give us more details, please use the space below

We may wish to arrange a short interview with some of those who answered this questionnaire. If you are willing to be interviewed, please provide details below:

ADDRESS:
.....

TELEPHONE NUMBER: Day:
Evening:

LIAISON RESEARCHERS

Mr Neil Jones

Principal Research Officer,
Surveys and Evaluative Studies Division,
NSW Department of TAFE

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Ms Pam Gray
Student Counsellor
Darwin Institute of Technology

Mr Peter Mitchell
Planning Officer
Office of ACT further Education
Department of Education
Replaced by

Ms Joan Walsh
Planning Officer
Office of ACT Further Education
Department of Education

2F6.56/OP11/MS/lp

TAFE NATIONAL CENTRE FOR RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT LTD
295 Elizabeth Street, Melbourne, South Australia 5000, Australia
Telephone (08) 42 7405
(Incorporated in South Australia)

Dear

A SURVEY OF PART-TIME STUDENTS WHO ARE FIRST YEAR WITHDRAWERS FROM
TAFE CERTIFICATE (OR EQUIVALENT) COURSES, 1986

As you are a part-time student who has recently withdrawn from the first year of a TAFE Certificate Course (or equivalent), we would appreciate it very much if you would spare time to answer and return the attached in the pre-paid envelope provided.

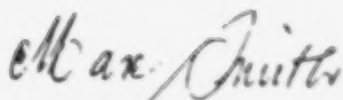
It is being distributed to selected people throughout Australia.

Our goal is to find out why people leave TAFE Certificate Courses before completing the Certificate, with a view to passing on to TAFE Authorities throughout Australia, information which will improve services for you, your friends and all future TAFE users.

Please do not be discouraged by the size of the questionnaire. Pages 1 to 5 are simply asking questions to give us an understanding of you as a person. The answers usually require a box or boxes to be ticked and should take about 10 minutes of your time. Pages 7 to 19 will require more thought and more time but you are not asked to answer all sections. It should take about half hour to complete. An opportunity is also provided on the last page for you to contribute in an individual way.

We can assure you the information you provided will remain confidential. By completing and returning this questionnaire, you will be making a very positive contribution to TAFE Australia-wide. We thank you in anticipation and hope you find the task interesting.

Yours sincerely,

Max Smith

RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICER

Encl.



2F6.1/OP11/MS/1p

TAFE NATIONAL CENTRE FOR RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT LTD
296 Payneham Road, Payneham, South Australia 5070, Australia
Telephone (08) 42 7905
(Incorporated in South Australia)

Dear

A SURVEY OF PART-TIME STUDENTS WHO ARE FIRST YEAR WITHDRAWERS
FROM TAFE CERTIFICATE (OR EQUIVALENT) COURSES, 1986

About three weeks ago we sent you a survey booklet seeking information on your withdrawal from the first year of a TAFE Certificate Course.

If you have already completed and returned that booklet to the TAFE National Centre for Research and Development, we thank you very much for giving your time and thought to it.

If you have not yet had the time to complete it or have overlooked replying, would you please help us by completing and returning it at an early date. The survey is a most important one and we shall value your contribution.

If you did not receive the survey booklet please let us know either by telephone or letter. We would be pleased to send another copy if you request it.

Again, our thanks.

Yours sincerely,

Max Smith
RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICER

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